



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa

Project progress report (January – December 2021), funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Sida Contribution ID 13331

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.

Copyright © African Forest Forum 2021.

All rights reserved.

African Forest Forum

P.O. Box 30677-00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA

Tel: 254 20 722 4203

Fax: +254 20 722 4001

E-mail: exec.sec@afforum.org

Website: www.afforum.org

Follow us on Twitter @ africanff

Like us on Facebook / African Forest Forum

Find us on LinkedIn / African Forest Forum (AFF)

Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa

Project progress report (January - December 2021), funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Sida Contribution ID 13331

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
1. INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.1 The project components, objectives, and outcomes.....	11
1.2 The project approach.....	12
1.3 Synergies between the Sida and SDC supported projects	13
1.4 The Covid-19 context and AFF adaptation strategies for project implementation ..	15
2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2021	16
2.1 Component 1: Sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems with the preservation of biodiversity	16
<i>Project outcome 1.1 Gender disaggregated stakeholders increasingly protecting forest lands and adopting appropriate sustainable land use management policies and practices.</i>	16
<i>Project outcome 1.2 Stakeholders, by gender, capacitated to use improved knowledge, skills, and best practices to contain loss of forest cover</i>	18
<i>Project outcome 1.3 Stakeholders, by gender, in African forestry capacitated to sustainably manage forest resource base in ways that enhance supply of ecosystem goods and services</i>	21
2.2 Component 2: Climate change and forest and tree-based ecosystem services	22
<i>Project outcome 2.1: Better understanding cultivated on the relationship between forests and trees, ecosystem services, and climate change in different contexts</i>	22
<i>Project outcome 2.2: Better understanding of measures to increase resilience to adverse effects of climate change on forests, trees and on forest dependent people disaggregated by gender.....</i>	24
<i>Project outcome 2.3: African stakeholders capacitated to implement recommendations and decisions from global climate change agreements, including NDCs, REDD+ and the Kyoto Protocol under the Paris Agreement.....</i>	26
2.3 Component 3: Renewable energy	28
<i>Project outcome 3.1: An understanding of the scale of production, use and potential for biofuels in Africa</i>	28
<i>Project outcome 3.2: An appreciation of the manner in which land shifts in the production of biofuels, food and primary forestry on the continent.....</i>	28
<i>Project outcome 3.3: Better understanding of the relationship between production and consumption of biofuels and greenhouse gases (GHGs)</i>	28
2.4 Component 4: Multilateral Environmental Agreements.....	30
<i>Project outcome 4.1: African delegates to MEA discourses effectively negotiate and articulate their forestry related interests.....</i>	30

<i>Project outcome 4.2: African stakeholders have better understanding of new and emerging issues related to forestry.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Project outcome 4.3: African stakeholders capacitated to implement recommendations and decisions from MEAS on forests and related issues.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Project outcome 4.4: African stakeholders capacitated to access global funding opportunities that come with the MEAs</i>	<i>32</i>
2.5 Component 5: Strengthening AFF as an institution	32
<i>Project outcome 5.1: Stakeholders receiving and using quality and timely reliable information from AFF.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Project outcome 5.2: Stakeholders have improved access to AFF knowledge products and service.</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Project outcome 5.3: AFF operating with improved processes and efficiency in the management of its projects and services.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Project outcome 5.4: AFF programmes, plans and activities are gender sensitive and responsive</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Project outcome 5.5: Enhanced capacity for financial monitoring, accounting, and reporting</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Project outcome 5.6: Enhanced efficiency in administration of AFF activities</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Project outcome 5.7: The Governing Council and its committees, together with PSAC, providing good policy guidance to AFF Secretariat and effective oversight on its plans, finances, and activities.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>(a) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects’ operational progress reports for 2020 ..</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>(b) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects’ Plans of Work and Budgets for 2021.</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>c) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects’ operational progress reports for 2021.</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>(d) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects’ Plans of Work and Budgets for 2022.....</i>	<i>39</i>
3. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNT	40

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFF	African Forest Forum
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
GC	Governing Council
GCF	Green Climate Finance
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GHG	Green House Gases
KMC	Knowledge Management and Communications
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOUs	Memoranda of Understanding
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PMER	Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting
PSAC	Project Steering and Advisory Committee
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation as well as the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in Developing countries
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African international organization which aims at providing a platform and creating an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to sustainable management, use and conservation of Africa's forests and tree resources, as part of efforts to eradicate poverty, promote gender equality, economic and social development, and stability of the environment.

AFF has an ongoing three-year Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) supported project entitled *Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa* that aims at generating and sharing knowledge and information through partnerships in ways that provide inputs into policy and decision-making options and capacity building, for improved forest management that better addresses poverty eradication, environmental protection and climate change effects in Africa. This report presents progress made in the second year of its implementation during period of January to December 2021.

During the reporting period the AFF Secretariat implemented the 2021 Plan of Work and Budget that comprised of project activities initiated during 2020 whose conclusion was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions; and project activities scheduled for 2021 in line with the project's masterplan. During the first half of the year efforts were directed towards conclusion of on-going studies to make progress on the achievement of the expected project outputs; and on sustaining momentum on knowledge management activities towards improved access to AFF's knowledge products and services by stakeholders which is a core function of the institution. During the second half of the year efforts were directed to stakeholder engagements and consultations including capacity building and sharing of knowledge and information from findings of studies conducted by AFF in efforts to achieve expected project outcomes. These were possible through the adoption of the hybrid approach to convenings that enabled the AFF Secretariat and experts to be digitally connected to multiple in-country face to face workshops where gatherings were permitted.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020 had presented an extraordinary season with unanticipated health and workplace challenges that brought into sharp focus the importance of establishing systems and response measures that strengthen organisational resilience and sustain robustness of programmes' operations. When governments started lifting lockdowns the AFF Secretariat in the first half of 2021 quickly shifted from an earlier approach for undertaking studies at regional level involving one or more experts travelling through the region to implement the study tasks to an approach that identified national experts from the countries comprising that, to generate country information that could contribute to on-going regional studies and under the guidance of the regional experts, who due to COVID19 restrictions could not travel to those countries. In other words, most efforts were directed to facilitating country studies, and additional experts at the national level

engaged with the view to conclude the regional studies during 2021 in preparation for dissemination of their results by the end of the year. Nevertheless, some experts still experienced difficulties and could not complete the country studies until the end of the 2021. Currently, some regional experts are in the process of concluding preparation of regional synthesis reports based on the country reports. Consequently, the dissemination of the findings has been deferred to the first half of 2022.

The lifting of lockdowns under the “new normal” also permits limited sized face to face in-country gatherings and offer the opportunity for organising in-country stakeholders’ workshops and trainings. To this end the AFF Secretariat adopted a hybrid approach through organising regional webinars for dissemination of the study results, and these involved AFF Secretariat staff and experts digitally connected to multiple face to face in-country meetings for capacity building and stakeholders’ meetings while observing national governments’ COVID-19 protocols. These were executed during the second half of 2021.

The following is a brief on the project’s achievements for the period 01 January to 31 December 2021:

1. In-depth primary data on key result areas for prior commissioned studies compiled through field surveys, stakeholders’ interviews, focus group discussions and consultations through forty-seven country studies and analysed to contribute to regional trends analysis on prioritised forestry issues in different forest types. A total of forty country analysis reports and nine regional synthesis reports have been produced for the studies as follows:

a) Sustainable land use management policies and practices

Analyses of sustainable land management policies and practices in different forest types in Africa.

- Three country reports on Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of Congo for the central Africa sub-regional analysis; and one sub regional synthesis report, policy brief, and fact sheet;
- Three country reports on Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania, for the eastern Africa sub-regional analysis; and one sub regional synthesis report, policy brief, fact sheet and journal article;
- Five country reports on Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe for the southern Africa sub-regional analysis; and sub-regional synthesis report, policy brief, fact sheet and journal article; and
- Three country reports on Guinea-Conakry, Niger and Togo for the western Africa sub-regional analysis.

b) Dynamics of drivers of forest cover loss with gender consideration

Studies on strengthening the capacity of stakeholders in African forestry to contain loss of forest cover in different forest types.

- Three country reports on Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe for the eastern and southern Africa sub-regional analysis; and one regional synthesis report; and
- One country report on Democratic Republic of Congo; one regional synthesis report for the west and central Africa sub-regions four country analyses on Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Senegal.

c) *Processes of forest planning and forest management*

Evaluation of forest planning and management processes in different forest types in selected African countries.

- A sub-regional report for francophone Africa covering four country analyses on Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Republic of Congo; and
- Three country reports on Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe for the Anglophone and Lusophone sub-regional analysis.

d) *The potential for production and use of liquid biofuels for green and circular economies*

Assessment of the potential of African countries for the production and use of liquid biofuels as a strategy for developing green and circular economies in Africa.

- A sub-regional report covering four country analysis in the central Africa sub-region on Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Republic of Congo; policy brief, fact sheet and journal article;
- Three country reports on Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania for the eastern Africa sub-regional analysis; and one sub-regional synthesis report; policy brief, fact sheet and journal article;
- Four country reports on Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe for the southern Africa sub-regional analysis; One sub-regional synthesis report, policy brief, fact sheet and journal article; and
- One country report on Sierra Leone for the west Africa sub-regional analysis.

2. Knowledge and information generated through partnerships with universities through field research and laboratory analysis on climate change and forest and tree-based ecosystems compiled into half year progress reports submitted by ten postgraduate research fellows as follows:

- a. Assessment of trends of impacts of climate change on forest and tree resources, and coping mechanisms in Africa through on-going field research in Central African Republic, dryland areas in Burkina Faso, humid forests in Kenya, Savannah grasslands in Benin, rainforests in Cameroon and in forests in southwestern Cote d'Ivoire; by seven students.
- b. Assessment of gender responsive resilience to climate change of forest related biophysical and socio-economic systems through on-going field research in tree-based landscapes in Togo, and REDD+ piloted site in south Nigeria; and woodlands in Zambia; by three students.

3. Enhanced awareness and strengthened understanding of over 240 forestry stakeholders representing 10 countries in the continent on global climate change agreements and mechanisms including the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement and NDCs, REDD+, and their implications for national forestry policies achieved through regional information sharing webinars organised to disseminate findings of in-depth analysis of national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement (PA) by African countries. The webinars titled *Sharing of information and experiences on national forest governance responses to the Paris agreement* were organised on 31 August to 1 September 2021

for six Francophone countries and 06 to 08 September 2021 for four Anglophone and Lusophone countries through a hybrid approach and convened forestry stakeholders through 10 simultaneous in-country workshops. The webinars provided policy advice to African stakeholders for improved forest governance that secures socio-economic development.

4. A critical mass of over 227 forestry practitioners in 11 African countries knowledgeable on forest related multilateral environmental agreements and equipped with negotiation skills created, and their capacity to mainstream decisions from international agreements into national processes strengthened through two sub-regional training webinars. The webinars titled: *Understanding and mainstreaming into national forestry policies, plans and actions of decisions from global and regional climate change related processes* were organised on 06 to 08 October 2021 for four Francophone African countries and on 13 to 15 October 2021 for seven Anglophone and Lusophone African countries.
5. Strategies and approaches for mainstreaming gender into AFF's programmes and activities identified through a gender audit and assessment of AFF staff and partners organisational processes. Based on the findings training modules on gender mainstreaming developed and used to train AFF on gender responsive programming; and a draft gender mainstreaming strategy developed to enhance gender sensitive and responsive approach to the design and implementation of AFF activities.
6. AFF's knowledge management's systems and processes strengthened through the operationalisation of the Knowledge Management Strategy 2021-2025 that emphasizes better quality standards and commensurate resources, accountability mechanisms, and buy-in from all stakeholders in providing a bridge between science-based knowledge and strong policies to support sustainable forest management in Africa.
7. Stakeholders from governments, research and academia, civil society and media worldwide improving their understanding of various forestry issues through information availed by AFF web-based platforms as demonstrated through 729,596 visits made to AFF's website by 299,085 visitors from 152 countries during the reporting period. Also, a total of 3,486,334 pages were opened and 18,505 pdf documents downloaded from it; in addition to an increase to 1,091 followers on twitter and 4,016 likes on Facebook.

1. INTRODUCTION

This current report presents annual progress made on the second year of implementation of the three-year Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) support to AFF on a project namely, *strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa* (Sida Contribution No. 13331 signed on 9 September 2019). In accordance with the project's masterplan, the AFF Secretariat prepared the second Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) for implementation of the project activities from January to December 2021. The 2021 POWB was reviewed and endorsed by the Project Steering and Advisory Committee and the Executive Committee of the AFF Governing Council (GC) during their consultations and meetings from November 2020 to April 2021, and subsequently approved by the AFF GC.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on workplace conditions, the Secretariat prepared the 2021 Business Continuity Plan to provide detailed implementation strategies for the 2021 POWB through a quarterly scheduling of the project activities, as a tool to inform strategic decision making during the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall project objective

The overall objective of the project is to generate and share knowledge and information through partnerships in ways that provide inputs into policy and decision-making options and capacity building, for improved forest management that better addresses climate change impacts, poverty eradication and environmental protection in Africa. The objective is to be achieved through the implementation of five project components, each addressing the critical issues of corresponding objectives, but all of which are intricately inter-related.

1.1 The project components, objectives, and outcomes

The project has five components and eight interlinked objectives as outlined below:

Component 1. Sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems with the preservation of biodiversity

Objective 1: To identify and promote opportunities for protecting and sustainably managing the forest resource base on the continent as well as the supply of its ecosystem goods and services

Component 2. Climate change and ecosystem services

Objective 2: To improve knowledge and capacities of African stakeholders in responding to adverse effects of climate change through better management and use of forest ecosystems and trees outside forests

Component 3. Renewable energy

Objective 3: To examine the potential for production and use of liquid biofuels in Africa as a means towards developing green and circular national economies

Component 4. Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Objective 4: To enhance national forest governance by strengthening African capacity to effectively participate in multilateral environmental processes, and mainstream and implement decisions from them into their national policies and activities

Component 5. Strengthening AFF as an institution

Objective 5a: To strengthen the capacity of the Knowledge Management and Communication (KM&C) Unit in managing and sharing of information.

Objective 5b: To strengthen the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Unit to effectively support AFF activities.

Objective 5c: To strengthen the Finance and Administration (F&A) Unit for improved management of financial and administrative functions.

Objective 5d: To improve overall governance and oversight on AFF activities

1.2 The project approach

In addressing these five components, AFF seeks to influence and facilitate organizations (governmental and non-governmental) and individual stakeholders to take actions that lead to improved forest management in ways that would eventually strengthen sustainable development in Africa. This will be done through promoting socially inclusive approaches and measures for protecting, planning and sustainably managing the forest resource, and supply of ecosystem goods and services on the continent (Component 1), catalyzing research and development on the relationship between climate change and forests, trees, forest ecosystems, and people to strengthen and deepen understanding on the relationship (Component 2), and on renewable bio-based energy options dynamics (Component 3). The project approach also, includes facilitating capacity development of African stakeholders on forest planning and management (Component 1), on climate change resilience (Component 2), and on participating in and addressing concerns from global forest related discourses (Component 4); in addition to strengthening mechanisms for knowledge brokerage to broader constituencies of influence, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting on impacts of project outcomes for organizational history and learning (Component 5).

To this end AFF is undertaking independent and objective analyses to generate up to date knowledge (with respect to activities comprising these components) and provide evidence-based advice (based on outputs from the work done through these components) to national,

regional and international institutions and other actors, on how economic, livelihood, climate change, food security and other environmental issues can be addressed through better management and use of forest ecosystems and trees outside forests in the context of sustainable development. Further, gender issues as relate to the project components are explicitly considered through identified project activities that specifically target women and youth. To AFF, gender is not only having sufficient numbers of women and youth in activities but also putting emphasis on policies and actions whose outputs increase benefits to these groups.

1.3 Synergies between the Sida and SDC supported projects

Concomitant to the Sida supported project, AFF is also implementing the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supported project titled *African forests, people and climate change* and is therefore investing efforts in synergies between the two projects through leveraging expertise and resources required for addressing themes/issues that have been prioritized by both projects. To this end the activities already identified in the 2021 Plan of Work and Budget for both projects were coordinated to strengthen implementation of the two projects in a complementary manner that would secure the delivery of respective project outputs and ultimately contribute to the achievement of projects' outcomes and impacts in a cost-effective manner. The project also builds on the foundation laid by a previous Sida funded project on *Strengthening sustainable forest management in Africa*, that was implemented in 2014-2019 as well as from previous phase of the SDC- supported project.

With respect to Component 1 of the Sida support on Sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems with the preservation of biodiversity, the Sida grant is supporting analyses that will identify and promote through piloting alternative livelihood options that are compatible with containing forest cover loss. On the other hand, the SDC support is promoting entrepreneurship on climate resilient livelihood opportunities focusing on gums and resins. In this context, both SDC and Sida supported projects aim to contribute to enhanced livelihoods, employment, national incomes through improved management of forests, trees, and ecosystems, including for NTFPs. Also, synergy is achieved through a partnership initiative between FAO, Great Green Wall and AFF focusing on non-timber forest products value chains for improved livelihoods and socio-ecological resilience to climate change impacts in the Sahel region. Another partnership between AFF and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) has focused on charcoal and honey value chains analyses in select countries in Africa, also aimed to promote livelihood improvement options.

With respect to Component 2 of the Sida support on Climate change and forest ecosystems, both SDC and Sida supported projects aim to assist stakeholders to integrate adaptation and mitigation options in response to the impacts of climate change. The Sida support is catalyzing research on the relationship between climate change and forests, trees, and people's resilience including gender, through postgraduate fellowships in partnership with fifteen universities in Africa. The SDC support is focusing on capacity

development of African stakeholders on climate change resilience, through the development and adoption of the Mitigation and Adaptation framework, developing contextualized training compendiums on forests and climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as research fellowships on international forestry and climate change through the AFF- School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL) at Bern University of Applied Sciences in Zollikofen, Switzerland partnership.

With respect to Component 3 of the Sida support on Renewable energy, both projects aim to enhance understanding of the manner in which land shifts in the production of biofuels, food, and primary forestry on the continent. Prior SDC support contributed to analyses on the dynamics on biofuel production and use in the context of climate change. The Sida support is building on the analyses and is exploring the potential for production and use of liquid biofuels in Africa as a means towards developing green and circular national economies.

With respect to Component 4 of the Sida support on Multilateral Environmental Agreements, both projects aim to strengthen Africa's capacity to effectively participate in multilateral environmental processes and addressing global concerns. Both Sida and SDC support contribute to enhancing Africa's participation in the forest related multilateral processes, as well as climate change global policies and initiatives, and their implementation. However, the Sida support is focused to a greater extent on forest related processes while the SDC support is more on climate change processes. During the reporting period both Sida and SDC projects successfully organised two sub-regional training webinars to strengthen the capacity of African countries on mainstreaming forest and climate change related Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEAs) decisions into their national policies, plans and activities. Training modules *Effective engagement of African delegates in international multilateral processes* developed through prior Sida support were used for the training.

During 2020 the SDC support focused on development of training modules for capacity building on development of bankable projects to mainstream MEAs. During the reporting period the outcome of outputs from the SDC support in Burkina Faso and Zambia was used to guide the development of bankable projects through write-shops organised in the countries through the Sida support. The Sida support will during 2022 use the training modules to facilitate, and jointly with SDC support, a training of trainers for development of projects in more countries and to mobilize global financial resources targeting sources such as Green Climate Finance (GCF), Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) for other countries and regions.

With respect to Component 5 of the Sida support on Strengthening AFF as an institution, both Sida and SDC support jointly facilitate i) strengthening of mechanisms for knowledge brokerage to broader constituencies of influence on stakeholder needs; ii) strengthening of the institution's capacity for knowledge management; iii) strengthening of the institution's capacity for managing its financial, human and physical resources; iv) improving of communication with AFF members and other stakeholders through web-based

platforms, WhatsApp groups, info mail and other social media platforms; v) improving of the planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems on impacts of project outcomes for organizational history and learning; vi) strengthening of the capacity for gender mainstreaming in all AFF activities and programmes; and vii) improving of overall governance and oversight on AFF activities. During the reporting period these have been successfully facilitate jointly by both projects.

1.4 The Covid-19 context and AFF adaptation strategies for project implementation

In response to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic that has impacted negatively on workplace conditions the AFF Secretariat prepared a COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan for the project to provide for the effective delivery of the POWB in the context of easing of restricted travel in-country but largely sustained restrictions on international travel and permitting of limited sized face to face gatherings under the “new normal”. Consequently, activities that could proceed through virtual platforms and in-country field visits were prioritized and facilitated during the reporting period to ensure progress on studies initiated in 2020. Accordingly, the AFF Secretariat engaged additional twenty-nine experts at the national level to conduct country field studies under the supervision of sub-regional experts, to contribute to the sub-regional analyses. Most in- country field studies and stakeholders’ consultations were successfully conducted and primary data on the countries on respective forestry issues in different forest types were successfully collected. Country analysis reports were prepared, and most have been consolidated into sub-regional synthesis reports.

With respect to large gatherings, including stakeholder workshops and training sessions, the AFF Secretariat adopted a hybrid approach for convenings that comprised of regional and sub-regional webinars digitally connecting Secretariat staff and other stakeholders to multiple in-country face to face meetings, simultaneously. These were executed during the second half of 2021.

This approach has enabled the Secretariat to make progress on the POWB amidst the COVID-19 pandemic workplace environment disruptions. The Secretariat continues to conduct regular monitoring of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic conditions in countries in Africa, in order to gauge the evolving enabling work environment that would be safe and secure for AFF staff, experts and other project implementing partners, while ensuring high quality of deliverables is achieved.

Scientific staff at the AFF Secretariat also participate in undertaking the activities to support the experts to overcome any emerging work-related challenges, and in coordinating, supervising, and monitoring all the project activities at national and regional levels. They also provide the required reporting on the project activities, as well as ensure that the project outputs are of required quality and reach the desired audiences. AFF benefits from safety guidance on the travel of staff and its experts from the CIFOR-ICRAF Task Force on COVID 19 that monitors the COVID 19 pandemic situation and provides advice to all institutions located at the ICRAF campus. The AFF Secretariat has six scientific staff for all its scientific activities. The scientific staff are supported by a senior communications officer,

a planning, monitoring and evaluation specialist, a senior administrative officer, and a senior finance officer.

This report focuses on key intervention areas that were undertaken during the period January to December 2021. Achievements on the project components are as presented in the next section.

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2021

2.1 Component 1: Sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems with the preservation of biodiversity

The project objective under this component is *to identify and promote opportunities for protecting and sustainably managing the forest resource base to enhance supply of ecosystem goods and services*. The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield three project outcomes as presented below.

Project outcome 1.1 Gender disaggregated stakeholders increasingly protecting forest lands and adopting appropriate sustainable land use management policies and practices.

The main project activity which has to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome is analysis of existing sustainable land management policies and practices in different forest types in Africa, specifically moist/rain forests, mangroves, woodlands, and parklands, and taking gender into consideration. The findings of the analysis will be disseminated to contribute to evidence-based adoption of land use systems that enable land users to maximise the economic, social, and ecological benefits from land while protecting forests. The following were achievements made towards this process during the reporting period.

Analysis reports on sustainable land use management policies and practices in different countries in Africa produced

In the context of an elaborated conceptual framework and in-depth stakeholder consultations at the country level on status and trends on sustainable land use management policies and practices in different forest types, primary data was documented and analysed for fifteen countries in different sub-regions.

The analysis focused on the following six Key Result Areas:

Key Result Area 1: Land management approaches and practices, including policies, institutions and legal measures guiding them, applied in different forest type areas documented.

Key Result Area 2: The sustainability of promising land management approaches and practices identified under no. 1 above assessed.

Key Result Area 3: The potential of the identified land management approaches and practices under no. 2 above, in terms of their compatibility with (a) the forestry development and (b) protection of forests and (c) development and protection of trees outside forests evaluated.

Key Result Area 4: The extent to which forest stakeholders are incorporating the identified Sustainable Land Management (SLM) approaches and practices in their forest plans and activities assessed.

Key Result Area 5: Gender roles in protecting forest lands and in adoption of appropriate SLM approaches and practices in selected different forest types assessed; and

Key Result Area 6: Institutional, policy, legal mechanisms and other measures that can be employed to enhance protection of forest lands in the study areas, identified.

The countries involved in the study are Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of Congo, all in the central Africa sub-region; Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania in eastern Africa sub-region; Guinea-Conakry, Niger, Senegal, and Togo in the western Africa sub-region; and Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in the southern Africa sub-region. Fourteen country analysis reports have already been produced.

The country analyses are currently being consolidated at the sub-regional levels to produce synthesis reports on sub-regional trends on land use management policies and practices for the different forest types. To this end the sub-regional technical reports for central, eastern and southern Africa sub-regions have been produced and are under review by the AFF Secretariat. Policy briefs, fact sheets and journal articles have also been submitted for review. The sub-regional report for western Africa sub-region is under preparation. The findings of the studies will subsequently be shared with relevant stakeholders during the first half of 2022 through planned stakeholders' information sharing webinars with the view to sensitise forestry stakeholders towards adoption of land use systems that enable land users to maximise the economic, social, and ecological benefits from the land while protecting forests.

The findings of the studies on promising sustainable land management (SLM) to protect forest lands; viable alternative sources of livelihood for forest dependent communities (from outcome 1.2) and relevant tree-based adaptation and resilience measures (from outcome 2.2) will be analysed to inform the development of pilot projects to disseminate and promote best practice in select countries. Information gathered from these reports will be combined with other available information to develop the relevant concept notes during the first quarter of 2022 to guide implementation of the pilots. This way AFF aims to promote opportunities to protect and sustainably manage forest resources through relevant tree-based climate change adaptation and resilience measures.

Project outcome 1.2 Stakeholders, by gender, capacitated to use improved knowledge, skills, and best practices to contain loss of forest cover

Two main project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome are: a) the assessment of dynamics of drivers of forest cover change, more specifically those that drive deforestation and forest degradation, and evaluation of initiatives such as gender sensitive livelihood options that have been undertaken to contain forest cover loss in different forest types in Africa; and b) the evaluation of efficiency of sawn timber value chains in selected countries in Africa, more specifically assess the approaches, technologies, and other means to increase efficiency in the sawn timber value chains in different forest types.

The findings of the analyses will, when disseminated, contribute to development of evidence-based strategies and approaches that would equip stakeholders with effective gender-sensitive technologies, skills, approaches and best practices to contain forest cover loss, increase efficiency in the use of forest and tree resources while simultaneously promoting economic and social empowerment of relevant forest dependent stakeholders. *This activity is being undertaken in synergy with the SDC supported project.*

The following were achievements made towards this outcome during the reporting period.

a) Assessment of dynamics of drivers of forest cover change, specifically those that drive deforestation and forest degradation, and evaluation of initiatives such as gender sensitive livelihood options to contain forest cover loss in different forest types

Analysis reports on drivers of forest cover change and evaluation of initiatives to contain forest cover loss in different forest types in different countries in Africa produced.

In the context of an elaborated conceptual framework and in-depth stakeholder consultations at the country level on drivers of forest cover change and their dynamics, as well as livelihood options in different forest types primary data was documented and analysed to generate knowledge and information on best practices to contain forest cover loss in nine countries in different sub-regions.

The analysis focused on the following three Key Result Areas

Key Result Area 1: The key drivers responsible for forest cover loss in different forest types and their dynamics, with explicit gender considerations identified and analysed.

Key Result Area 2: Gender-based measures and initiatives taken by various stakeholders to reverse deforestation and forest degradation trends evaluated; and

Key Result Area 3: With respect to Key Result Area 2 above, a comprehensive analysis of viable alternative sources of livelihood that have potential to contain forest cover loss while simultaneously promoting economic and social empowerment of stakeholders, especially women and youth conducted.

The countries involved in the study are Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe in the eastern and southern Africa sub-regions, and Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Senegal in the Central and West Africa sub-regions. Reports on seven country analysis have already been submitted to the AFF Secretariat while analysis reports on two countries are under preparation. Two synthesis reports for i) eastern and southern Africa sub-regions; and ii) for west and central Africa sub-regions have been produced.

The findings of the studies will subsequently be shared with relevant stakeholders during the first half of 2022 through planned stakeholders' information sharing webinars with the view to equip stakeholders with best practices to contain forest cover loss including effective gender-sensitive technologies and skills, and livelihood options, while simultaneously promoting economic and social empowerment of relevant forest dependent stakeholders.

Piloting promising approaches for containing forest cover loss

The findings of the studies on viable alternative sources of livelihood for forest dependent communities; promising sustainable land management (SLM) approaches to protect forest lands (from outcome 1.2); and relevant gender responsive tree-based adaptation and resilience measures (from outcome 2.2) will also inform the development of pilot projects to disseminate and promote best practice in select countries. The findings will be combined with other available information to develop relevant concept notes during the first quarter of 2022 to guide implementation of the pilots that is expected to take place during 2022.

b) Evaluation of efficiency of sawn timber value chains in selected countries in Africa

Harmonised methodologies for evaluation of efficiency of sawn timber value chains in selected countries in Africa

Harmonised and easily replicable methodologies for evaluation of efficiency of sawn timber value chains in six countries namely Cameroon, Central African Republic, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe achieved through two virtual meetings organised on 16 and 22 November 2021. The meetings brought together six national experts contracted to conduct the country analyses. The sessions agreed on:

- deliverables on key result areas that would lead to approaches, technologies, and other means to increase efficiency in the sawn timber value chains in different forest types in the selected countries; methodologies and data collection tools to use; forest types to be studied; information and data to be collected in each country;
- stakeholders and institutions to consult; and
- COVID-19 compliant timelines.

Inception reports for evaluation of efficiency of sawn timber value chains in selected countries in Africa produced

Based on the results of the virtual meetings on harmonising the study methodologies, six inception reports, one for each country, were prepared by the experts. These reports establish the foundational baseline for the studies. The reports elaborate the conceptual framework for undertaking the studies; issues, themes and indicators to be studied; the methodological approaches and tools to generate data on key result areas; key stakeholder groups to engage, as well as the detailed COVID-19 compliant timetable.

Literature review reports on evaluation of efficiency of sawn timber value chains in selected countries in Africa produced

In the context of the elaborated conceptual framework, a desk-based systematic overview of existing evidence on approaches, technologies, and other means to increase efficiency in the sawn timber value chains in different forest types in the four countries was produced through 4 structured literature review reports, one for each country. Two literature reports for two countries are currently being prepared. The literature review reports resulted in a) comprehensive documentation of existing information on each country on the sawn timber value chains, processes and actors; efficiency of the various operations; availability of the industrial round wood material; structures governing the value chain; as well as other factors that affect the efficiency of the value chains; and b) a critical evaluation of all the research that has been conducted on each key result area, and of information documented in published as well as in grey literature including policy documents, project reports, etc on the countries.

Specifically, the literature review focused on the following six Key Result Areas:

Key Result Area 1 The sawn timber value chain from the industrial roundwood raw material base, through harvesting/logging, processing, drying, to sale as sawn timber as well as actors at the various levels in the value chain mapped

Key Result Area 2: Efficiency of the various operations in the value chain including, harvesting/logging, log transport, sawmilling operations, sorting and drying of sawn timber, marketing and trade in sawn timber assessed detailing the product flows, productivity, technologies used and transaction costs at each step from logging to sale of sawn timber;

Key Result Area 3: The industrial round-wood raw material availability and ways to make it meet demands for sawn timber on a sustainable basis assessed;

Key Result Area 4: Structures governing each level of the sawn timber value chain identified, how they operate documented and how they can be made more efficient explored.

Key Result Area 5: Other determining factors and approaches (institutional, financial, policy, and others) that i) constrain efficiency and/or could be employed for increased efficiency at various levels of the sawn timber value chains elaborated

Key Result Area 6: Based on the findings on (a) to (e), recommendations for improving the sawn timber value chain in ways that are environmentally, socially and gender inclusive proposed.

The synthesis of this work presents the current status and trends on the key result areas in different forest types in all the countries, and gaps in knowledge and information required for the studies. Based on this analysis, a representative sample of the forests and study sites was selected for in-depth studies through field visits. Subsequently, the experts are preparing for field research to conduct in-depth studies in selected sites during the first half of 2022. All the six countries have lifted lockdowns enabling field research to be conducted.

Project outcome 1.3 Stakeholders, by gender, in African forestry capacitated to sustainably manage forest resource base in ways that enhance supply of ecosystem goods and services

The main project activity that has to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome is to evaluate ways for improving forest planning and forest management in selected countries in Anglophone, Lusophone, and Francophone Africa, with the aim to enhance the supply of forest ecosystem goods and services. The findings will contribute to development of training modules, based on gaps identified, that would equip stakeholders with improved knowledge, skills and best practices for effective forest planning and management of forests and tree resources, including NTFPs, for enhanced supply of ecosystem goods and services.

The following were achievements made towards this outcome during the reporting period.

Analysis reports on evaluation of ways for improving forest planning and forest management in selected countries in Africa to enhance the supply of forest ecosystem goods and services in Africa produced.

In the context of an elaborated conceptual framework and in-depth stakeholder consultations at the national level on forest planning and forest management processes in different forest types primary data were documented and analysed to generate knowledge on the adequacy of forestry planning processes and effectiveness of forest management to achieve the supply of forest ecosystem goods and services in the countries. Consequently, the analyses identified capacity requirements among the stakeholders to inform development of training modules that would be valuable in development of strategic human capacity for improved forest planning and forest management. The analyses have been conducted for eight countries.

The analysis focused on the following five Key Result Areas:

Key Result Area 1: Planning processes applied in different forest types in the selected countries evaluated.

Key Result Area 2: Adequacy of the plans (annual, short, long term, tree and stand level, etc.), in terms of: quality of information and tools; adequacy of knowledge and skills used for planning and management; sensitivity to gender considerations; and constraints in planning and ways to contain them evaluated.

Key Result Area 3: Extent of compliance to plans by implementing institutions, constraints experienced and how to overcome them evaluated.

Key Result Area 4: State of management of the forest types in the selected countries, including constraints experienced and measures to improve various operations that characterise forest management evaluated; and

Key Result Area 5: Training module or guidelines that can support capacity building in forest planning and forest management developed.

The countries where the studies were undertaken are Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Republic of Congo in Francophone Africa; and a regional analysis technical report has already been submitted to AFF Secretariat. The country studies were also undertaken in Angola, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to represent Anglophone and Lusophone Africa. Three country reports and one sub-regional report on regional trends in forest planning and forest management processes in francophone countries have been produced. One country report and sub-regional report for Anglophone and Lusophone Africa are under preparation.

Further, based on training needs assessment training modules on forest planning and forest management are being prepared for Francophone Africa, and Anglophone and Lusophone Africa that will be consolidated to produce training modules for the African region.

The findings of the studies will subsequently be shared with relevant stakeholders during the first half of 2022 through planned stakeholders' information sharing webinars and the training modules will once finalised and validated be used for stakeholders' training.

2.2 Component 2: Climate change and forest and tree-based ecosystem services

The project objective under this component is *to improve knowledge and capacities of African stakeholders in responding to adverse effects of climate change through better management and use of forest ecosystems and trees outside forests*. The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield the following project outcomes:

Project outcome 2.1: Better understanding cultivated on the relationship between forests and trees, ecosystem services, and climate change in different contexts

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome are in-depth studies on the assessment of trends of impacts of climate change on forests, tree-resources, and on forest ecosystem services, as well as coping mechanisms in selected African countries covering the Sahel parklands, moist forests, mangroves, and woodlands. The improved stakeholders' understanding of the impacts of climate change and variability on forests, tree resources, and forest ecosystem services is expected to in turn support the development and/or strengthening of sound adaptation policies for improved resilience of the biophysical and social systems.

The studies are being conducted through postgraduate fellowships, in partnership with eleven African universities where selected students are registered. The studies will thus

also result in capacity development and professional expertise in forestry among young professionals in Africa through joint research work undertaken through postgraduate programmes. *These studies are being conducted in synergy with the SDC supported project.*

The following were achievements made towards this process during the reporting period.

Based on partnerships between the AFF Secretariat and eleven African universities¹ created through Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Research Agreements to support twelve postgraduate research fellowships, progress has been made in the field research and half year progress reports produced by seven students. The postgraduate research is contributing to improved availability of up-to-date quality knowledge based on empirical research on the relationships between forests and trees, ecosystem services, and climate change in different forest contexts as follows:

1. *De nouvelles informations sur l'adaptation et la vulnérabilité hydraulique au changement climatique pour 15 espèces d'arbres tropicaux d'Afrique centrale : caractéristiques anatomiques du bois et traits fonctionnels des feuilles* (New information on adaptation and hydraulic vulnerability to climate change for 15 species of tropical trees in central Africa : anatomical characteristics of the wood and functional features of the leaves) by **Geraud Mankou**, a PhD student at Université Marien Ngouabi, Republic of Congo. Research is on-going on assessment of vulnerability of 15 species to climate change in a transitional moist forest in the Republic of Congo.
2. *Séquestration du carbone dans le sol par le reboisement pour une meilleure gestion des terres au Burkina Faso* (Carbon sequestration in the soil through reforestation for better land management in Burkina Faso) by **Sata Diawara**, a PhD student at Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso. Field research is on-going to assess the growth performance of three tree species namely *Bombax costatum*, *Khaya senegalensis* and *Lannea microcarpa* in degraded drylands in Saria and Laba localities in Burkina Faso and their accumulation of biomass and carbon stock in their branches, roots, and trunks.
3. *Changements hydroclimatiques et vulnérabilités biophysiques dans le Sud-ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire* (Hydroclimatic changes and biophysical vulnerabilities in the southwest of

-
- i. ¹ Pan African University, housed at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria
 - ii. Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire
 - iii. Université D'Abomey-Calavi, Benin
 - iv. Université de Yaoundé, Cameroon
 - v. Université Marien Ngouabi, Republic of Congo
 - vi. Université Nazi Boni, Burkina Faso
 - vii. University of Dschang, Cameroon
 - viii. University of Parakou, Benin
 - ix. Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources, Ethiopia
 - x. University of Zambia, Zambia
 - xi. l'Université Ouaga 1 Professeur Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso

Côte d'Ivoire) by **Yaya Doumbia**, a PhD student at Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire. Field research is completed, and final preparation of dissertation is at the final stage. The research looks at the relationship between the tree cover, structure and carbon sequestered in the classified forests of Southwestern Côte d'Ivoire, namely Haute dodo, Dassioko and Niégré.

4. *Assessment of Mau forest cover, climate change and impacts of evictions on livelihoods in Rift-Valley, Kenya* by **Alice Jebiwott**, PhD student at the Pan African University, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Field research and data analysis has been completed and preparation of the dissertation is at the final stage. One manuscript based on the research has been published in the journal of Remote Sensing Applications: Society and the Environment.
5. *Tendances climatiques, impacts sur les services écosystémiques des forêts et stratégies d'adaptation des communautés rurales au Bénin* (Climate trends, impacts on forest ecosystem services and adaptation strategies of rural communities in Benin) by **Djidjoho Lot Gbossa**, MSc student at the University of Parakou, Benin. Field research and data analysis has been completed and the dissertation is under preparation.
6. *Menaces induites par les changements climatiques sur la résilience écologique des forêts tropicales du Cameroun: cas des forêts semi-décidues de Belabo* (Threats induced by climate change on the ecological resilience of tropical forests in Cameroon: the case of the semi-deciduous forests of Belabo) by **Guylene Ngoukwa**, PhD student at the Université de Yaoundé, Cameroon. Field research has been completed and data analysis is on-going.
7. *Dynamique de l'arboriculture fruitière, des services écosystémiques et réduction de la vulnérabilité des populations aux changements climatiques dans la région des hautes terres de l'Ouest Cameroun* (Dynamics of fruit trees, ecosystem services and reduction of the vulnerability of populations to climate change in the highlands region of West Cameroon) by **Danielle Morelle Tchouankap Chimi**, PhD student, University of Dschang, Cameroon (PhD). Field research has been completed and data analysis is on-going.

Progress on the other five students is being monitored as field research conditions affected by COVID-19 pandemic, and insecurity in some countries, become conducive in the various countries. Progress reports are to be submitted every six months in close coordination with their supervisors.

Project outcome 2.2: Better understanding of measures to increase resilience to adverse effects of climate change on forests, trees and on forest dependent people disaggregated by gender.

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome are in-depth studies on assessment of gender responsive resilience to climate change of forest related biophysical and socio-economic systems in selected countries covering Sahel parklands, moist forests, mangroves, and woodlands. The improved stakeholders' understanding of the measures on how to increase the resilience of biophysical and social-

economic systems is expected to in turn support development and/or strengthening of sound gender sensitive adaptation policies and measures.

The studies are being conducted through postgraduate fellowships in partnerships with four African universities. The studies will thus also result in capacity development and professional expertise in forestry among young professionals in Africa through joint research during the postgraduate programmes. *These studies are conducted in synergy with the SDC supported project.*

The following were major achievements made towards this process during the reporting period.

Based on partnerships between the AFF Secretariat and four African universities² created through MOUs and Research Agreements to support six postgraduate research fellowships progress has been made in research and half year progress reports prepared by three students. The postgraduate research is contributing to improved availability of up-to-date quality knowledge based on empirical research on resilience of biophysical and socio-economic systems taking into account relevant gender and marginalised groups as follows:

1. *Contribution des agroforêts à café-cacao dans l'adaptation face aux changements climatiques dans la préfecture de Wawa : zone écologique IV du Togo* (Contribution of coffee and cocoa agroforests in adapting to climate change in the prefecture of Wawa : ecological zone IV of Togo) by **Affi Christelle Attiogbe**, PhD student at Université de Lomé, Togo. Field research is on-going in agroforestry systems in Wawa prefecture in Togo to assess the vulnerability of local community groups disaggregated by gender to effects of climate change and adaptation measures.
2. *Climate change and climate justice : a gender analysis of REDD+ piloted site in South Nigeria* by **Basiru Adeniyi Okanlawon**, PhD student at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Field research is on-going on the effect of gender considerations in climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes and factors to consider to achieve climate justice for all social groups in Nigeria
3. *Climate change, forests and forest products : Gendering vulnerability and adaptation strategies of forest dependent communities in Lusaka and Mumbwa Districts, Zambia*, by **Chibuye Florence Kunda**, PhD student, University of Pretoria, South Africa (Zambia) (PhD). Field research is currently on-going in Zambia.

i. ² Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria
ii. Université Dan Dicko Dankoulodo de Maradi, Niger
iii. Université de Lomé, Togo.
iv. University of Pretoria, South Africa

Progress on the other three students is being monitored as field research conditions affected by COVID-19 pandemic become conducive in the various countries. Progress reports are to be submitted every six months in close coordination with their supervisors.

Project outcome 2.3: African stakeholders capacitated to implement recommendations and decisions from global climate change agreements, including NDCs, REDD+ and the Kyoto Protocol under the Paris Agreement

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome are to: enhance awareness of forestry stakeholders on the provisions and implications of the Paris Agreement (PA) and related global climate change policies and initiatives, actions required to improve national forest governance; and to strengthen their capacity for mainstreaming of global and regional decisions from climate change international agreements and initiatives.

The following were achievements made towards this process during the reporting period.

a) Strengthened stakeholders' understanding of the Paris Agreement provisions, and implications for forestry governance

Strengthened understanding of forestry stakeholders in ten African countries on global climate change agreements including Paris Agreement and NDCs, and REDD+ achieved through sharing of findings of in-depth analyses of national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement (PA) and related global climate change policies and initiatives conducted in ten countries. This was achieved through the two sub-regional webinars titled *Sharing of information and experiences on national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement* organised through a hybrid approach on 31 August to 1 September 2021 for six Francophone countries, and on 06 to 08 September 2021 for four Anglophone and Lusophone countries respectively and convened 150 and 90 forestry stakeholders, respectively. Ten country workshops were organised in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DRC, The Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Niger, and Tanzania, digitally linked to the AFF Secretariat and experts. Ten facilitators engaged in each country were instrumental in the effective delivery of the in-country workshops eight of which were face to face in line with the country's COVID-19 protocols. The outcomes at the country level have been presented in ten country workshop reports produced by the national facilitators.

Deliberations during the webinars highlighted the following key issues

- The need to move actions from governments' websites/shelves to the grassroots and to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination in implementation of the responses to the agreements in order to address gaps between policy and practice and to cascade domestication of MEAS at grassroot
- Lack of capacity on multilateral agreements of all stakeholders including the private sector
- Limited financial, technological and human capacity to integrate global and regional climate change policies into the forest sector

- The need for coordination among the RIO- conventions for cost effective implementation and reporting and for the global and regional policies to be mainstreamed sufficiently at local/country level.

The strengthened understanding of provisions and implications of the Paris Agreement will be valuable to inform policy makers and other stakeholders to design evidence-based measures, policies and institutional frameworks that will enhance forest related adaptation and mitigation measures through improved compliance.

Usually, AFF follows up on how participants to its information sharing workshops use the information and its eventual impacts. This is done six months after the workshop and then one year after the workshop.

b) A critical mass of African forestry experts knowledgeable on forest related intergovernmental processes created

A critical mass of 227 forestry practitioners in 11 countries equipped with negotiations skills and knowledgeable on forest related intergovernmental processes created for African countries and their capacity to mainstream decisions from international climate change agreements into national processes strengthened. This was achieved through two sub-regional training webinars on *Understanding and mainstreaming into national forestry policies, plans and actions of decisions from global and regional climate change related processes titled Understanding and mainstreaming into national forestry policies, plans and actions of decisions from global and regional climate change related processes* organised through a hybrid approach on 06 to 08 October 2021 for four Francophone countries, and on 13 to 15 October 2021 for seven Anglophone and Lusophone countries. The webinars convened 90 and 137 participants respectively through 11 country workshops digitally connected to the AFF Secretariat and resource persons who participated via the Zoom platform. Eleven country workshops were organised in Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Eleven facilitators engaged in each country were instrumental in the effective delivery of the in-country workshops nine of which were face to face in line with the country's COVID-19 protocols. The outcomes at the country level have been presented in eleven country workshop reports produced by the national facilitators.

The training has contributed to building institutional capacities of African countries to domesticate decisions from the agreements. Consequently, this has resulted in an expanded network of African stakeholders with negotiations skills. Such capacity can make the continent more effective in engaging in international forestry related processes and in domesticating international agreements.

The training was guided by an AFF developed training module on *Effective engagement of African delegates in international multilateral processes* that was generated by a prior Sida support.

Deliberations during the training resulted in a number of recommendations summarised as follows:

- Development of national and regional strategies, action plans and on forest management should be negotiated and implemented jointly with other stakeholders including companies, communities, academia and NGOs;
- There is need for more capacity building for more negotiators and stakeholders for better participation and implementation of the international agreements
- There is need for regional and sub-regional discussions and fora to strengthen the African group of negotiators, share knowledge, joint projects and build networks
- Africa should develop a multisectoral delegation with competence and good profile for negotiations and include young people to avoid future gaps
- There is need for effective implementation of bilateral & multilateral programs and protocols, there is need for integration nationally, wide dissemination and involvement of the private sector and the rural communities

Usually, AFF follows up on how participants to its capacity building workshops use the information and its eventual impacts. This is done six months after the workshop and then one year after the workshop.

2.3 Component 3: Renewable energy

The project objective under this component is to examine the potential for production and use of liquid biofuels in Africa as a means towards developing green and circular national economies. The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield the following project outcomes:

Project outcome 3.1: An understanding of the scale of production, use and potential for biofuels in Africa

Project outcome 3.2: An appreciation of the manner in which land shifts in the production of biofuels, food and primary forestry on the continent

Project outcome 3.3: Better understanding of the relationship between production and consumption of biofuels and greenhouse gases (GHGs)

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realise the three outcomes are assessments of: the potential for the production and use of liquid biofuels as a strategy for developing green and circular economies; dynamics in the associated land shifts; and the relationship between production, consumption of biofuels and greenhouse gases in selected countries in different sub-regions in Africa. The improved understanding of these aspects particularly the existing and likely future opportunities, or prospects, and challenges in production and use of biofuels in Sub-Saharan Africa will contribute to evidence-based planning for the growth and development of this sector in ways that generate incomes to

local people and nations, without compromising food and environmental security. *These studies are being conducted in synergy with the SDC supported project.*

The following were achievements made towards this process during the reporting period.

Analysis reports on potential of African countries for the production and use of liquid biofuels as a strategy for developing green and circular economies in selected countries on the continent produced.

In the context of an elaborated conceptual framework and in-depth stakeholders' consultations at the country level on status of production, use and trade in liquid biofuels as well as market dynamics at domestic and international levels and land shifts, primary data was documented and analysed for fifteen countries. The analyses generated knowledge and information on the potential of liquid biofuels for green and circular growth in the fifteen countries.

The analysis focused on the following five Key Result Areas:

Key Result Area 1: Status of biofuel production at national level, including land allocated for production of liquid biofuels; availability of feedstock; use of agricultural crops; production, processing, and consumption of biofuels; and GHG emissions associated with biofuel production and use in selected countries assessed.

Key Result Area 2: Opportunities, challenges and prospects in production and use of biofuels, as well as coping mechanisms for addressing the challenges evaluated.

Key Result Area 3: Effect of liquid biofuel production on cropland in forest margins and the implications on food security and primary forest cover loss (deforestation and forest degradation) assessed.

Key Result Area 4: Competitiveness of the biofuels in the international market assessed; and

Key Result Area 5: Policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks relevant to the sustainable production, processing, transport, and consumption of liquid biofuels in the context of changing climate outlined.

The countries involved in the study are Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Republic of Congo in the central Africa sub-region; Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania in the eastern Africa sub-region; Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone in the west Africa sub-region; and Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe in the southern Africa sub-region. Analysis reports on twelve countries have already been submitted while reports on three countries are under preparation.

The countries' analyses are being consolidated into sub-regional analyses. Three sub-regional technical reports for central, eastern and southern Africa sub-regions have already been produced and submitted for review. Policy briefs, fact sheets and journal articles have also been submitted for review. The sub-regional report for west Africa sub-regions is under preparation.

The sub-regional technical reports present a comprehensive documentation of the scale of production, use and potential for liquid biofuels in the context of food-fibre-fuel nexus in the sub-regions. These findings of the studies will subsequently be shared with relevant stakeholders during the first half of 2022 through planned stakeholders' information sharing webinars, with the view to inform the development of the liquid biofuel sector as part of green and circular national economies.

2.4 Component 4: Multilateral Environmental Agreements

The project objective under this component is: to enhance national forest governance by strengthening African capacity to effectively participate in multilateral environmental processes, and mainstream and implement decisions from them into their national policies and activities. The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield four project outcomes as presented below all in synergy with the SDC supported project.

Project outcome 4.1: African delegates to MEA discourses effectively negotiate and articulate their forestry related interests

The main project activity that has to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome is to provide support to African delegates in forestry related multilateral negotiations. The AFF's Technical Support Team to Raise the Profile of Forestry in Africa (TST) effectively supported African delegates to the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF16) held on 26-30 April 2021 through a common Africa position. The position was achieved through UNFF16 TST preparatory meeting organized by AFF on 22 April 2021 via digital platform that generated key messages related to (i) Emerging Issues: 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. The consensus document was instrumental in the effective articulation of Africa's position that was conveyed through government representatives during the session.

Project outcome 4.2: African stakeholders have better understanding of new and emerging issues related to forestry

The main project activity that has to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome is to undertake studies/reviews on new and emerging issues related to forestry. During the reporting period the AFF Secretariat compiled and shared knowledge on topical new and emerging issues through international webinars organised through partnership initiatives as follows:

- A presentation entitled *Promoting forests as the force in a green and resilient recovery: Building momentum for the XV World Forestry Congress*, organised by the World Forest Congress Secretariat, the Korea Forest Service and FAO and jointly delivered with AFF at a UNFF 16 side event on 26 April 2021

- A presentation entitled *Forest-based bio economy for all: opportunities and challenges* at the Science Policy Forum for Africa and Europe during the IUFRO Global Digital Event during World Day on 28 September 2021
- A presentation entitled *Forests, trees and eradication of poverty: An expanded policy brief for Africa* hosted by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) delivered at side events during UNFF16 session on 26 April 2021, the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on 9 July 2021 and the IUFRO World Day on 28 September 2021
- A keynote presentation and address 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, on 17 November 2021; and during the Africa Development Bank webinar on Forest products for industrialization and regional integration in Africa, on 18 November 2021
- A presentation titled *Forests and tree-based livelihoods in Africa: some COVID-19 effects and the role of SFM* during the UNFF validation workshop on Guidelines to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on SFM in Africa, on 20 December 2021.

These are in addition to a new study through a research partnership with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and Swedish Research Council (FORMAS) on *Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on sustainable livelihoods, forests, and conservation in Africa*. The study is conducting analysis on African low-income households' use of forests and forest products to cope with income losses due to Covid-19 pandemic, and how this use may influence forests and natural resources.

Project outcome 4.3: African stakeholders capacitated to implement recommendations and decisions from MEAS on forests and related issues

The main project activity that has to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome is to identify obligations on the African forestry sector in relation to the MEAs outcomes and to share outcomes from forestry related multilateral negotiations through relevant platforms for African forestry stakeholders. During the reporting period a stakeholders' platform to examine the obligations of eleven African countries arising from forestry related multilateral environmental agreements was provided through sub-regional training webinars on *Understanding and mainstreaming into national forestry policies, plans and actions of decisions from global and regional climate change related processes* for eleven countries in Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone Africa organised through a hybrid approach as reported under outcome 2.3 above. Through the trainings stakeholders explored and deliberated on measures to contain constraints in mainstreaming MEAs into national forestry processes.

Usually, AFF follows up on how participants to its capacity building workshops use the information and its eventual impacts. This is done six months after the workshop and then

one year after the workshop to monitor the efforts to strengthen forest governance processes.

Project outcome 4.4: African stakeholders capacitated to access global funding opportunities that come with the MEAs

The main project activity that has to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome is to identify and document global funding opportunities that are relevant to African forestry. During the reporting period the project, in synergy with SDC support through 10 experts, prepared analysis reports on in-country forestry stakeholders' access to existing international funding mechanisms (GEF, GCF, GFFFN), and capacity constraints, to inform development of contextualised training modules on development of bankable projects. The training modules will once finalised be used to build capacity of various stakeholders through a training workshop to be organised in first quarter of 2022. It is estimated that the training will produce about ten concept notes that will be developed with national stakeholders for submission to funding sources and initiatives such as GEF, GCF, etc.

2.5 Component 5: Strengthening AFF as an institution

The project objectives under this component are: a) *to strengthen the capacity of the Knowledge Management and Communication (KMCOM) Unit in managing and sharing of information; b) to strengthen the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Unit to effectively support AFF programmes and activities; c) to strengthen the Finance and Administration (F&A) Unit for improved management of financial and administrative functions; and d) to improve overall governance and oversight on AFF activities. These activities are being undertaken jointly with the SDC supported project.*

Achievements on each of these objectives during the reporting period is presented below.

Objective 5a: To strengthen the capacity of the Knowledge Management and Communication Unit in managing and sharing of information.

The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield two project outcomes namely,

Project outcome 5.1: Stakeholders receiving and using quality and timely reliable information from AFF

Project outcome 5.2: Stakeholders have improved access to AFF knowledge products and service.

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realize the two outcomes are: sustaining momentum on dissemination of knowledge and information generated by AFF members and partners; and strengthening AFF's knowledge management processes through the adoption and operationalisation of an updated knowledge management strategy.



2021-AFF-KM-STRAT
EGY.pdf

During the reporting period, the following were achieved:

Increased knowledge shared and accessed through web-based and journal platforms

The AFF's Knowledge Management and Communication Unit continued to sustain the momentum on dissemination of knowledge and information generated by the AFF members and the Secretariat. The Unit is guided by the African Forest Forum (AFF)'s Communication Strategy designed to connect with key audiences that include governments, international organizations, African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), research institutions, civil society, private sector, youth groups, media and other stakeholders. A functional and robust portal for sharing information has been established and linked to 118 global forest related databases and networks and has crosslinks to 48 third party and partner organizations. This portal has been instrumental in collecting and sharing articles on recent developments and information in forestry.

Specific knowledge products disseminated:

During the reporting period nine knowledge products developed by the previous Sida supported project *Strengthening sustainable forest management in Africa* were finalized, formatted, laid out as documents produced under *AFF Reports*, and journal papers and shared with stakeholders through the AFF website as follows.

1. Mahanzule Chavana R. Z. 2019. *Strengthening of private sector in forestry, including identification and promotion of public private partnership (PPP) models/approaches for forest compatible sustainable livelihoods development in Mozambique.*
2. Kojwang G., 2019. *Sub-regional report on transboundary forest resources and related environmental issues in Eastern and Southern Africa*
3. Maisharou A. 2021. *Le partenariat public privé (PPP) dans le secteur forestier en Afrique de l'ouest: cas de la république du Niger*
4. Onadja A. P., 2019. *Partenariat public - privé dans le secteur forestier en Afrique de l'ouest: cas du Burkina Faso*
5. N'guessan K., 2019. *La filière Bois En Côte d'Ivoire: Productions Primaire et Secondaire, Relations entre les Acteurs, Tendances Future et Contribution à l'Economie Nationale et aux Moyens de Subsistance des Populations*
6. Ramananantoandro T., 2019. *Partenariat public-privé dans le secteur forestier à Madagascar: les approches prometteuses*
7. Alhadj A. B., 2019. *Développement de Partenariat Public - Privé dans le Secteur Forestier (Tchad)*

Further, two journal papers have been published during the reporting period from the research results obtained by two PhD students namely Ferdinand Handavu from Zambia, on the fellowship programme on the previous Sida support and Alice Jebiwott from Kenya on the current fellowship programme as follows:

8. Ferdinand Handavu, Stephen Syampungani, Gudeta W. Sileshi & Paxie W. C. Chirwa (2021): *Aboveground and belowground tree biomass and carbon stocks in the miombo woodlands of the Copperbelt in Zambia*, Carbon Management, DOI: 10.1080/17583004.2021.1926330
9. Alice Jebiwott, George Morara Ogendi, Busuyi Olasina Agbeja, Abiodun Akintunde, Alo Ronald Kibet, 2021. *Mapping the trends of forest cover change and associated drivers in Mau Forest, Kenya*. Remote Sensing Applications: Society and Environment Volume 23, August 2021, 100586

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

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

In the period January to December 2021, the website recorded the following:

1. A total of 299,085 unique visitors, which is the total number of visitors to the AFF web site from January to December 2021 irrespective of the number of times they visited the web site.
2. Received 729,596 visits, which is the total number of individual visitors who visited the AFF website and browsed during January to December 2021. The number represents the total number of visitors, irrespective of the number of times they visited the AFF web site.
3. A total of 3,486,334 pages opened and 18,505 pdfs were downloaded from the website, during January to December 2021 by all visitors to the web site.
4. Hits during January to December 2021 were 3,085,242 which is the number of file requests made in the AFF website by all visitors.
5. The number of AFF followers on twitter increased to 1,091 and Facebook likes to 4,016
6. The number of countries represented by the visitors during the period were 152. The geographical spread was worldwide, spreading from Africa to the Americas through Europe to Asia.

AFF Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2025) approved and operationalised

Measures to strengthen AFF's position as a leading knowledge brokerage institution on forestry in Africa instituted through the approval of the AFF Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2025) by the AFF Governing Council and operationalization of the same. It provides a conceptual framework for the generation, management, sharing, communication, and transfer of scientific knowledge on forest related information among the many stakeholders involved in the African forestry sector. It emphasizes better quality standards and commensurate resources, accountability mechanisms, and buy-in from all stakeholders for a robust bridge between science-based knowledge and strong policies to support sustainable forest management in Africa.

The strategy identifies Communities of Practice (CoPs) as an efficient and easily accessible way for sharing information and learning to advance innovation and the uptake of best practices to solve critical problems. Applied to sustainable forest management and climate change related challenges, functional communities of practice allow a geographically and professionally varied audience to tackle the complexity of issues by deepening their knowledge and sharing expertise. To this end the in synergy with SDC support the project has established five communities 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, and (vi) Gums and Resins actors. During the reporting period online discussion moderators for these communities of practice were engaged to facilitate two Communities of Practice on [Nationally Determined Contributions](#) and [non-timber forest products](#).

Objective 5b: To strengthen the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Unit to effectively support AFF activities

The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield two project outcomes namely, a) *Outcome 5.3: AFF operating with improved processes and efficiency in the management of its projects and services*; and *Outcome 5.4: AFF programmes, plans and activities are gender sensitive and responsive*

Project outcome 5.3: AFF operating with improved processes and efficiency in the management of its projects and services.

The project activity that has to be undertaken in order to realise this outcome is development of a robust system for monitoring and evaluating AFF interventions at all levels including capacity building for AFF staff on integrated project management systems and tools. These are aimed at improving monitoring, uptake, and adoption at all levels of forest - based interventions.

During the reporting period progress was made on the following:

The procurement of an *“integrated project management system”* initiated in the second half of 2020 has been concluded and the system was installed during December 2021 and will be operationalized in early 2022. It is expected that the adoption of such a techno-serve

system which might integrate programming and finance will improve AFF's monitoring and reporting.

Three impact assessment reports on the extent to which the AFF project outputs had generated the expected outcomes among the target audiences were finalised and shared as follows:

- *Assessment reports to establish the extent to which the project outputs had generated the expected outcomes among the target audiences: Workshop Follow-up Report, May 2019*
- *An assessment on how information on forest certification has been used by forestry stakeholders in enhancing sustainable forest management in Africa: Workshop Follow-up Report. May 2019*
- *An assessment on how information on tree improvement and germplasm management has been used by forestry stakeholders in enhancing sustainable forest management in Africa. Workshop Follow-up Report May 2019*

Usually, AFF follows up on how participants to its information sharing workshops use the information and its eventual impacts. This is done six months after the workshop and then one year after the workshop.

During the reporting period capacity of AFF staff for data collection and analysis was strengthened through in-house training conducted on mobile data collection tools including ODK and KOBO collect and outcome harvesting.

Project outcome 5.4: AFF programmes, plans and activities are gender sensitive and responsive

The project activity that has to be undertaken in order to realize the outcome 5.4 is gender analysis for AFF's programmes; and based on the findings, develop a gender strategy for AFF's programmes and activities; and build the capacity of AFF Secretariat staff, Governing Council (GC) and partners using the same.

During the reporting period the following were achieved:

A Gender Audit/Assessment report on AFF's programmes and plans was produced that presents the strength, policies, programmes, organization process and structures and recommends key strategic interventions to strengthen commitment to enhance capacities for gender mainstreaming at all levels. The audit documented AFF staff and partners' perceptions on how gender issues are addressed in programming portfolio and internal organizational processes and identified gaps that need to be addressed to enable AFF and partners to systematically improve institutional and management capacity for mainstreaming gender more effectively in its plans and activities. Consequently, the assessment generated recommendations on strategies and approaches for mainstreaming gender into AFF's programmes and activities.

Based on the findings of the audit training modules on gender mainstreaming were developed to guide AFF's institutional development on gender to be used to train AFF staff, GC, and partners. The training guidelines were used to strengthen AFF's capacity for the development of gender sensitive and gender responsive programmes, projects, plans and activities at different levels with the view to maximize the project's impact through enhanced benefits to women and youth. Equally, based on the findings of the audit a draft gender mainstreaming strategy has been developed to guide adoption of an enhanced gender-sensitive approach to the design and implementation of AFF activities.

Objective 5c: To strengthen the Finance and Administration (F&A) Unit for improved management of financial and administrative functions.

The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield two project outcomes as follows:

Project outcome 5.5: Enhanced capacity for financial monitoring, accounting, and reporting

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realize this outcome are adoption and operationalization of techno-serve systems; training of AFF Secretariat in planning, implementation, and utilization of resources; and development of AFF Finance Policy.

During the reporting period the following were achieved:

An analysis was conducted on AFF's efficiency and effectiveness in planning, implementation and utilization of resources and a report was produced that outlines capacity needs for AFF Secretariat. A training session on the subject will be conducted in the first half of 2022. The analysis report has been reviewed and is being revised. A training to improve AFF's efficiency in its planning and implementation operations will be conducted during 2022.

Further, the document "AFF Rules and Regulations" is currently under review. The review report will give way to the drafting of "AFF's Finance Policy" that will consider emerging trends in financial standards.

Project outcome 5.6: Enhanced efficiency in administration of AFF activities

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realize this outcome are: Improvement of professional capacity of administration staff; a training needs assessment on human resource issues (HRM) among staff members; development of an administrative strategy for AFF; and strengthening the administration function to improve efficiency in service delivery

To this end a concept note on these activities to deliver on the project outcome has been developed. The planned activities will be conducted virtually in the first half of 2022.

Objective 5d: To improve overall governance and oversight on AFF activities

The fulfilment of this objective is expected to yield one project outcome namely:

Project outcome 5.7: The Governing Council and its committees, together with PSAC, providing good policy guidance to AFF Secretariat and effective oversight on its plans, finances, and activities.

The project activities that have to be undertaken in order to realize the outcome are consultative meetings on the governance of AFF's programmes and activities by the Governing Council and its committees, and the Project Steering and Advisory Committee (PSAC). The PSAC, the Executive Committee of the Governing Council and the Governing Council have held virtual consultations that facilitated the operations of the Secretariat as follows:

(a) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects' operational progress reports for 2020
Progress reports

Two progress reports were extensively discussed and recommended for approval by the Governing Council through the Seventh Meeting of the Project Steering and Advisory Committee (PSAC) that was successfully organised virtually on 22 February 2021. The same had been earlier considered by the Executive Committee on 28 – 29 November 2020.

The reports are:

1. The progress report for the Sida supported project *Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa* for the period January to December 2020; and
2. The progress report for the SDC supported project *African forests, people and climate change* for the period January to December 2020.

Consequently, these reports were approved by the Governing Council for submission to respective donors in line with partnership agreements.

(b) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects' Plans of Work and Budgets for 2021.

Plans of Work and Budgets for the Sida and SDC supported projects were extensively discussed and recommended for approval by the Governing Council through the Seventh and Special Meetings of the Project Steering and Advisory Committee (PSAC) that were successfully organized virtually on 22 February and 13 April 2021, respectively. The Special PSAC meeting was specifically convened to consider adjustments to approaches for implementation of the meetings and workshops in the context of COVID-19 restrictions to international travel and in-person meetings in African countries. The same had been earlier considered by the Executive Committee in November 2020. These were:

1. The 2021 Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) for the Sida supported project *Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*; and
2. The 2021 POWB for the SDC supported project *African Forests, People and Climate Change*.

Consequently, these plans of work and budgets were approved by the Governing Council for submission to the donors in line with partnership agreements and paved the way for execution of the approved activities.

c) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects' operational progress reports for 2021

Operational progress reports for the Sida and SDC supported projects for 2021 were extensively discussed at the Executive Committee virtual meeting that was successfully organised on 30 November 2021. The Executive Committee recommended the reports for appropriate processing subject to being updated, by the Eighth Meeting of the Project Steering and Advisory Committee (PSAC) that is planned for early 2022, and approval by the Governing Council.

The reports are:

1. The progress report for the Sida supported project *Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa* for the period January to December 2021; and
2. The progress report for the SDC supported project *African forests, people and climate change* for the period January to December 2021

(d) Approval of Sida and SDC supported projects' Plans of Work and Budgets for 2022.

Plans of Work and Budgets for the Sida and SDC supported projects for 2022 were extensively discussed at the Executive Committee virtual meeting that was successfully organised on 30 November 2021. The Executive Committee recommended the Plans of Work and Budget for appropriate processing by the Eighth Meeting of the Project Steering and Advisory Committee (PSAC) that is planned for early 2022, and approval by the Governing Council. The plans of work and budgets are as follows:

1. The 2022 Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) for the Sida supported project *Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa* for January to August 2022; and
2. The 2022 Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) for the SDC supported project *African forests, people and climate change* for the period January to December 2022

These meetings are organized in synergy with the SDC supported project. The Governing Council committees and the PSAC meetings are organized to provide governance

oversight, strategic guidance, scientific quality assurance, as well as financial oversight, thus ensuring that project implementation stays on course and that all practices reflect AFF's values of quality participation and inclusivity and pass the threshold of international standards and are consistent with Sida and AFF values and principles.

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 and measures to provide stability to experts and partners engaged to deliver on the project objectives and outcomes.

The AFF's BCP included the adoption of 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 tasks 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 these virtual means. AFF's presentations delivered through virtual platforms have reached a large audience to beyond Africa. The use of digital technologies has resulted in savings since travel related expenses for experts and participants were not incurred, as well as lowering AFF's carbon footprint. This way progress could be made on the project deliverables.
- For planned regional studies, the BCP recommended country focus on execution of studies where in-country travel is permitted while international travel was still restricted. National experts were engaged to conduct field research, collect and analysis country level data to contribute to regional studies that had been delayed. 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 that will contribute to the regional studies and the achievement of the project outputs and outcomes. Quality assurance for the process and of the deliverables is being achieved through the agility and resilience the staff at the AFF Secretariat in addressing issues that emerged.

- For the specific case of trainings and information sharing events, 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 the countries of face-to-face meetings, to attend the events virtually, therefore allowing greater reach of AFF information. Arrangements were put in place to execute this approach for the approved workshops and trainings during the second half of 2021.
- The hybrid approach to meetings has been successfully applied to organize three regional stakeholder meetings and capacity building workshops to convene at total of 21 in-country multiple workshops simultaneously and digitally connected to the AFF Secretariat and experts. National facilitators were engaged to coordinate logistics at the national level and facilitate country level discussions. The multiple country workshops have spread the reach of AFF's dissemination and impact on the continent. Notably also the simultaneous multiple country meetings have also multiplied the administrative demand to secure logistical arrangements in good time. Consequently, a longer time horizon to planning is essential for effective delivery of the workshops. The hybrid approach has proved to be a practical option for organizing large regional meetings where international travel is restricted.

The Secretariat continues to conduct regular monitoring of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic conditions in countries in Africa, in order to gauge the evolving enabling work environment that would be safe and secure for AFF staff, experts and other project implementing partners and to apply the appropriate measures.

Further, AFF benefits from safety guidance on the travel of staff and its experts from the CIFOR-ICRAF Task Force on COVID 19 that monitors the COVID 19 pandemic situation and provides advice to all institutions located at the ICRAF campus.



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



For more information please contact:

The Executive Secretary
African Forest Forum
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
P.O. Box 30677-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: +254 20 722 4000, Fax: +254 20 722 4001
Email: exec.sec@afforum.org; Website: www.afforum.org

