



28 June 2022

Item No. 4 of the Agenda: Ratification of major decisions made by the Governing Council: 2017-2022

1. Development of project proposals

1.1 Projects funded by grant from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

The project on “Strengthening sustainable forest management in Africa” implemented through a Sida grant was implemented between April 01, 2014 and July 31, 2019. A report on its implementation between 2014 and 2016 was discussed during the previous meeting.

The overall objective of the project was: *“to generate and share knowledge and information through partnerships in ways that provide inputs into policy options and capacity building for improved forest management that better address poverty eradication and environmental protection in Africa”*. The operationalization of this objective was guided by the following six specific objectives:

1. To facilitate the emergence of a strong partnership platform through which stakeholders identify challenges related to sustainable management of forest and tree resources and co-create solutions.
2. To facilitate the collation, synthesis, provision of access to, exchange and management of critical information and knowledge demanded by stakeholders in African forestry for forestry compatible development.
3. To catalyse efforts to enhance sustainable management practices that have potential to improve resilience of forests and trees to adverse effects of climate change, and up-scale promising approaches that support livelihoods.

4. To facilitate the formulation and harmonization of evidence-based policies, regulations and governance mechanisms to strengthen public and private institutions to effectively support SFM and transparent trade.
5. To enhance capacity of institutions and individuals – including farmers and farmer organizations, and other private sector actors, professional organisations, and public sector organizations - to achieve forest compatible development.
6. To strengthen participation in regional and international debates and negotiations related to forestry and enhance informed country adoption and implementation of international and regional forest and related agreements.

The above objectives were to be achieved through the implementation of six project components, each addressing the critical issues of the corresponding objective, but all of which are intricately inter-related. The six components are:

1. Partnership platform for catalysing institutional change (*Partnership Platform*)
2. Knowledge management and brokerage for enhanced management of forest resources in Africa (*Knowledge Management*)
3. Forest and tree resources management for enhanced human livelihoods (*SFM & Livelihoods*)
4. Forestry policy, regulation, governance and trade in forest and tree products (*Policy & FLEGT*)
5. Strengthening Africa's capacity for sustainable management and use of forest and tree resources (*Capacity Strengthening*)
6. Supporting Africa's engagement in global and regional forestry processes and implementation of agreements (*Enhanced International Engagement*)

A report highlighting the achievements from this project will be given in a separate document.

At the expiry of this project AFF developed another project on: *Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa* also funded by a 42 million Swedish Kroner grant from Sida, (equivalent in Sept. 2019 to US\$ 4.5 million) and to be implemented from September 01, 2019 to 31 August 2022. This project has been given a one year no-cost extension to 31 August 2023 due to delays in its implementation arising from restrictions imposed by COVID19 since 2020.

Project goal: 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 address poverty eradication and environmental protection in Africa.

The project is divided into five components namely:

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

Outcome 1: Gender disaggregated stakeholders increasingly protecting forest lands and adopting appropriate sustainable land use management policies and practices

Outcome 2: Stakeholders, by gender, capacitated to use improved knowledge, skills and best practices to contain loss of forest cover

Outcome 3: Stakeholders, by gender, in African forestry capacitated to sustainably manage the forest resource base in ways that enhance the supply of 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

Outcome 1: Better understanding cultivated on the relationship between forests and trees, ecosystem services, and climate change in different contexts

Outcome 2: Better understanding of measures to increase the resilience to adverse effects of climate change on forests and tree resources and on people who depend on them, disaggregated by gender

Outcome 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

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.

Outcome 1: An understanding of the scale of production, use and potential for biofuels in Africa

Outcome 2: An appreciation of the manner in which land shifts in the production of biofuels, food and primary forestry on the continent

Outcome 3: Better understanding of the relationship between production and consumption of biofuels and greenhouse gases (GHG)

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

Outcome 1: African delegates to MEA discourses effectively negotiate and articulate their forestry related interests

Outcome 2: African stakeholders have better understanding of new and emerging issues related to forestry

Outcome 3: African stakeholders capacitated to implement recommendations and decisions from MEAs on forests and related issues

Outcome 4: African stakeholders capacitated to access global funding opportunities that come with the MEAs

Component 5. Strengthening AFF as an institution

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

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

Outcome 5.2: Stakeholders have improved access to AFF knowledge products and service

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

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

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

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

Outcome 5.5: Enhanced capacity for financial monitoring, accounting and reporting

Outcome 5.6: Enhanced efficiency in administration of AFF activities

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

Outcome 5.7: The Governing Council and its committees, together with Projects Steering and Advisory Committee (PSAC), providing good policy guidance to AFF Secretariat and effective oversight on its plans, finances and activities

The Governing Council of AFF, at its 15th meeting held on 04-05 April 2019, approved the submission of the project document to Sida for funding.

The Members' Forum is requested to endorse the decision by GC to approve this project for implementation by AFF

1.2 Projects funded by grant from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Since 2011 AFF has been implementing a project on *African Forests, People and Climate Change* structured in three phases, with the first one was implemented between 2011-2014, second phase: 2014-2018, and third phase: 2019-2021.

We have reported on the first two phases.

The 14th AFF Governing Council meeting held on 22 – 23 March 2018 approved the submission to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) a three-year project proposal within its Climate Change Programme (CCP). SDC approved the project and extended a grant of Swiss Francs 4.5 million (about US\$4.5 million) to AFF to implement the project between 15 November 2018 and December 31, 2021. This project has been given a one year no-cost extension to 31 December 2022 due to delays in its implementation arising from restrictions imposed by the COVID19 pandemic since 2020.

The overall objective of the programme remained the same, i.e. to *“Create capacities of stakeholders to strengthen the role of Africa’s forests and trees to adapt to climate change and mitigate its adverse effects in various landscapes in ways that will enhance livelihoods, sustain biodiversity and improve the quality of the environment”*

The project has four specific objectives that are to be achieved through 7 outcomes

Objective 1. To strengthen capacity of African forestry stakeholders in adopting best practices that integrate both adaptation and mitigation options in response to the impacts of climate change and variability to biophysical and social systems in different landscapes

Outcome 1.1. African forestry stakeholders have better understanding on integration of adaptation and mitigation options addressing climate change challenges and opportunities on different forests, tree resources and social systems

Objective 2. To enhance national forest governance by strengthening the capacity of African stakeholders to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives related to forestry

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

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

Objective 3. To promote entrepreneurship opportunities and technologically efficient means for value addition in African forestry, including those related to climate change that enhance livelihoods, national incomes and employment

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

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

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

Outcome 4.2 Operationalisation of knowledge management services and membership engagement enhanced

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

The Members' Forum is requested to endorse the decision by GC to approve this project for implementation by AFF

2. Implementation of project activities

All annual plans of work and budgets are approved by the Governing Council before they are implemented. The planned activities and their budgets are already in the grant contracts extended to AFF by SDC and Sida; so, nothing new is introduced except to extract this information from the grant contracts and write them as detailed plans of work and budgets for each year.

During the period 2017-2022 the Governing Council approved the following annual plans and budgets for AFF.

Governing Council (GC) meeting	Approved plan of work and budget	Total approved budget (US\$)
13 th GC: 30-31 March 2017	(a) Plan of Work and Budget for January - December 2017-Sida grant	1,713,532

	(b) Plan of Work and Budget for January-December 2017-SDC grant Project had a no-cost extension for January -May 2018.	1,695,666
14 th GC: 22 – 23 March 2018	(a) Plan of Work and Budget for January 2018- March 2019-Sida grant	1,225,282
	(b) Plan of Work and Budget for November 2018 to December 2019-SDC grant	1,329,500
15 th CG: 04-05 April 2019	For the Sida grant, the Plan of Work and Budget for 2018 was extended to March 2019, later there was a no-cost extension between April and May 2019 for Sida support; after which a new project was developed and started implementation in September 2019.	
16 th GC: 16 April 2021, Virtual There was no GC meeting in 2020 because COVID19 restrictions began to be implemented in many African countries a few weeks to the planned meeting date.	(a) Plan of Work and Budget for September 2019 – December 2020 -Sida grant	2,035,161
	b) Plan of Work and Budget for January-December 2020-SDC grant	1,504,364
	(a) Plan of Work and Budget for January-December 2021 -Sida grant	2,182,275*
	b) Plan of Work and Budget for January-December 2021-SDC grant	2,210,838*
17 th GC: 29-30 April 2022	(a) Plan of Work and Budget for January-August 2022 -Sida grant	1,441,155
	(b) Plan of Work and Budget for September 2022- August 2023 -Sida grant during a no-cost project extension period	1,336,045
	b) Plan of Work and Budget for January-December 2022-SDC grant during no-cost extension period	1,812,844

** The budgets for 2021 are higher than for other years because there were activities that could not be implemented in 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions, especially holding workshops and such gatherings which are usually costly, that were carried forward to 2021. The carrying forward of such activities have eventually resulted into a no-cost extension period for the Sida supported project to September 2022-August 2023, and for the SDC supported project to January-December 2022.*

The Members' Forum is requested to endorse the decision by GC to approve these plans of work and budgets for the work of AFF in the period 2017-2023.

Information on the implementation of these plans will be made available through Agenda Item no. 5 on Tuesday, June 28 and Wednesday, June 29, 2022, .

3. Project operational and audit reports

Each year the AFF Secretariat compiles annual operational reports that are transmitted to Sida and SDC. Annual audit reports are made and during this period; the audit firms were Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) and Deloitte & Touche . All reports in the following table were approved by the Governing Council and transmitted to Sida and SDC who also accepted them.

Also, during this period AFF obtained a clean financial audit report each year from Ernst & Young, its audit firm.

Governing Council (GC) meeting	Approved reports by GC and accepted by SDC and Sida
13 th GC: 30-31 March 2017	(a) Operational report for January – December 2016 for Sida supported project
	(b) Operational report for January – December 2016 for SDC supported project
	(c) Financial audit report for 2016-by PwC
14 th GC: 22 – 23 March 2018	(a) Operational report for January – December 2017 for SDC supported project
	(b) Operational report for January – December 2017 for Sida supported project
	(c) Financial Audit Report for 2017-by Deloitte and Touche
15 th CG: 04-05 April 2019	(a) Final report on SDC supported project-phase II- (01.11.2015 – 31.12.2017) The project had a no-cost extension for January-May 2018.
	(b) Operational report for January-December 2018 for Sida supported project
	(c) Operational report for January-December 2018 for SDC supported project
	(c) Financial Audit Report for 2018-by Deloitte and Touche
16 th GC: 16 April 2021, Virtual There was no GC meeting in 2020 because COVID19 restrictions began to be implemented in many	(a) Operational report for November 2018 to December 2019 for the SDC supported project
	(b) Operational report for September to December 2019 for new Sida supported project <i>“Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa”</i>

African countries a few weeks to the planned meeting date.	(c) Operational report for January-December 2020 for Sida supported project
	(d) Operational report for January-December 2020 for SDC supported project
	(e) Final report on Sida supported project “Strengthening sustainable forest management in Africa” for 2014-2019
	(f) Financial audit reports for 2019 by Deloitte and Touche and 2020 by Ernst & Young
17 th GC: 29-30 April 2022	(a) Operational report for January to December 2021 for Sida supported project
	(b) Operational report for January to December 2021 for SDC supported project
	(c) Financial audit report for 2021 by Ernst & Young

The Members Forum is requested to endorse the decision by GC to approve these reports in the period 2017-2022.

4. AFF Strategy: 2021-2025

- This strategy sets out a vision for AFF to deliver effectively on its “Programmatic approach to the work of the African Forest Forum”.
- The strategy aims to position the institution as a leading organisation on African forestry in its commitment to promote sustainable management of forestry resources in ways that address the needs of the African people and the environment, they live in.
- Based on the seven priority areas of the AFF Programmatic Approach, the Strategy sets AFF on a pathway that considers the dynamism characterizing the African forestry sector; what the society wants from the forest and tree resources and what potential responses can be made to address these demands. It thus considers the opportunities and strengths within the African forestry sector as well as weaknesses and threats. The Strategy thus sets the pathway that AFF will follow in facilitating African countries to also contribute to the achievement of the Global Forest Goals and targets within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The strengthened science-policy-management framework in the Strategy and the re-casting of AFF’s approach from focusing only on processes and outputs orients the strategy more towards outcome and impact.

The strategy is laid out as follows:

- Global and Africa-wide priorities in forestry that should guide the work of AFF;
- Opportunities that Africa’s diversity presents for AFF and African forests, including a wide range of issues that influence people and forests or are impacted by them, such as climate change, issues AFF should not overlook;

- Principles and values that should guide AFF in achieving its vision, mission and goal, and particularly in working together with its partners and other forestry related stakeholders;
- Strategic guidance for the development of the programmatic work of AFF in the short and medium term (5-15 years)
- Highlights on how the institution will implement the strategy.

5. AFF Knowledge Management Strategy: 2021-2025

This strategy spells out the guiding principles, roles and responsibilities, resources requirements and monitoring and evaluation considerations that are anchored on the following four strategic objectives.

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

The Governing Council in its 16th Meeting held on 16th April 2021 deliberated and adopted the AFF Strategy 2021-2025 and AFF Knowledge Management Strategy 2021-2025

The Members Forum is requested to endorse the decision by GC to approve the AFF Strategy 2021-2025 and AFF Knowledge Management 2021-2025.

AFF Secretariat 22 June 2022