Community of Practice:

REDD+ and best practices integrating forests and tree-based mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change in Africa

21 November – 2 December 2022 I 11.00a.m-2.00p.m Nairobi time/ 8.00a.m-11.00a.m GMT/ via Zoom

Concept Note

1. INTRODUCTION

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It is an association of individuals who share the quest for and commitment to the sustainable management, use, and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for the socio- economic wellbeing of its people and for the stability and improvement of its environment. The purpose of AFF is to provide a platform and create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to achieving sustainable management, use, and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty, promote gender equality, and economic and social development. Through all its programmes and activities, AFF seeks to promote the empowerment of all marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, who have remained vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and whose representation, priorities, and needs are seldom addressed in the forestry sector.

2. BACKGROUND

Africa's forests cover more than 624 million hectares, accounting for 20.6% of the continent's landmass. They are of great ecological, socio-cultural and economic importance (FAO, 2020). Forest ecosystem is also one of the highest climate change contributing sector accounting for almost 20% of global greenhouse gas emission through its conversion into agricultural and grazing lands for livestock , large-scale commercial agriculture and other land use. Deforestation and forest degradation are currently causing a rapid decline in forest cover on the continent. Thus, between 2010-2020, Africa recorded the highest annual rate of net forest loss with 3.9 million hectares, followed by South America with 2.6 million hectares. This rate of net forest area loss in Africa has increased in each of the relevant periods since 1990 (FAO, 2020). In Central and West Africa, the area deforested has doubled in the last decade (with forest cover losses increasing from 1,631,000 ha between 2000 and 2010 to 3,897,000 ha between 2010 and 2020) (FAO).

The direct causes of this situation are human activities that have a direct impact on forest cover, such as agriculture, infrastructure development, logging, mining development etc. Indirect factors are fundamental social processes, such as human population dynamics or agricultural policies, which operate at local, national and global levels and have an indirect impact. A rapidly growing world population and globally rising demands for land-based ecosystem services and products will increase the pressure on forest ecosystems and other natural resources. The loss and degradation of forests exacerbate impacts on already vulnerable populations with direct repercussions on their livelihoods. The downward spiral sets will continue to reduce the resilience of landscapes, peoples and ecosystems against climate change and lowers agricultural outputs. To establish sustainable livelihoods including food security and poverty reduction becomes more difficult and costly to achieve.

The contribution of forests and trees to climate change mitigation and adaptation is well established. Forests and trees contribute to adaptation to climate change through provision of several ecosystem services (Creed and van Noordwijk, 2018). More than 62 percent of Africa's

population depend on the goods and services from ecosystems, many of which are from forest ecosystems (IPBES 2018b). Forests and trees contribute to soil formation and erosion control (Bennett et al., 2009). They provide food, feed, building materials, medicines and importantly, energy. An estimated 90 percent of the continent's population depends on firewood and charcoal for energy, especially for cooking (IPBES, 2018b). Forests provide a primary source of medicinal products to about 80 percent of the populations, with a total of 5 400 medicinal plants having been documented in Africa (IPBES, 2018b). A meta-analysis by Reed *et al.* (2017) covering the ecosystem services impacts in tropical forests, found that overall, the presence of forest and trees has a primarily positive effect on crop yields in Africa thus providing a "security net" function for millions of rural people (Dudley *et al.,* 2008), contributing to poverty alleviation. This is particularly important in a continent that is home to the ten countries featuring at the bottom of the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2020).

In term of Climate Change mitigation, the recognition of the role of forests and tree-based ecosystems in mitigating the effects of climate change is now supported by the vast majority of the scientific world. The role of forests in carbon sequestration is particularly important: 80% of terrestrial carbon stored in vegetation and 40% of carbon stored in soils are accounted for in forest ecosystems (Leroy et al. 2013). Of particular importance is the extent and high productivity of tropical forests. Between 47.5% and 62.5% of the carbon stored in forests (soil and vegetation) is stored in tropical areas (Leroy et al., 2013). Some tree-based ecosystems such as mangroves constitute one of the most important carbon sinks on the planet and sequester higher amounts of carbon than terrestrial forest ecosystems, play the buffering role against shoreline erosion, protection against extreme climate events through absorption and dispersion of tidal surges, and groundwater recharge (Hutchinson et al., 2014).

Based on the crucial importance of forest and tree-based ecosystem to the planet, reversing the trend of deforestation and forest degradation become therefore essential and recognizing this urgency, many governments and other stakeholders in Africa are actively engaging in developing and promoting more adapted and sustainable solutions. Forests and tree-based landscape options integrating adaptation and mitigation of climate change appear to be of particular relevance in sustaining life on earth (IPBES, 2018).

One of the such promoted nature-based solutions aiming to climate change mitigation with adaptation benefits is REDD+. Put forward by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Bali Action Plan, a result-based payment mechanism REDD+ was initially positioned as an instrument to reduce negative incentives by combatting deforestation and forest degradation. It was then opened up, to positive incentives for increasing carbon stocks. Thus, restoration and afforestation/reforestation activities allow, respectively, to increase the carbon density per hectare on already existing forests, and to afforest land that was bare but considered 'forestry' (Leroy et al. 2013). Investments and cash flows of up to USD 20 billion per year could be mobilized by countries' forestry sectors, provided that such flows are used to strengthen economic incentives for forest protection and thus help counteract the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (FAO and ITTO, 2010). Countries engaged in the REDD+ process should also develop national safeguards in line with the Cancun safeguards, in which effective participation of all stakeholders and gender mainstreaming are mandatory provisions.

Other forest and tree-based initiatives such as AFR100 ,landscape restoration initiatives, the "Great Green Wall", the "zero deforestation" commitment etc have been documented to have adaptation and mitigation benefits.

However, relevant information on the above initiatives and processes are not always readily available to experts and practitioners in different sectors impacted by climate change. It is therefore important to establish a knowledge-sharing platforms to exchange ideas, seek advice, and research results in this regard. Across the continent, this limited access to information is amplified by intricate themes that require continuous learning.

The African Forest Forum (AFF) who so far has been working to promote sustainable solutions to the regression of African forest ecosystems has developed the A*frican framework for integrating forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change*, as strategic effort to support locally appropriate actions that address socio-environmental challenges. This M&A framework aims to focus on enhancing resilience and forestry practices towards repairing, restoring, and regenerating nature and communities. Further, the framework also aims to foster inter-sectoral integration of forest and on-farm tree-based interventions, advocate for incentives and capacity building support to stakeholders to, in effect, boost the potential of nature-based solutions to tackle climate action. Furthermore, AFF has developed the concept of Community of Practice to serve as an efficient and easily accessible way for sharing information and learning.

This session of Community of Practice focuses on REDD+ as well as other forest and tree-based approaches that integrate adaptation and mitigation in response to climate change.

Aim of the Community of Practice

The aim of this edition of the Community of Practice is to share knowledge and innovation to enable African Stakeholders to integrate forest and on-farm tree-based mitigation and adaptation options using the contextualized framework for effective reporting in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other national plans and programs. More specifically the CoP will address:

- The basic concepts related to REDD+, forest and tree-based climate actions;
- The contribution of REDD+ and contribution to Climate Change adaption and mitigation;
- New forest and tree-based initiatives and their contribution to Climate Change adaptation and mitigation as well as their relationship with REDD+ ;
- Challenges and opportunities for Stakeholders' mobilization and engagement in REDD+ and tree-based projects;
- success factors, best practices and incentives for implementing REDD+ and forests and tree-based integration of mitigation and adaptation
- Monitoring, reporting and assessing the effectiveness of REDD+, forest and tree-based activities for adaptation benefits and mitigation outcomes

Methodology

The Community of Practice (CoP) will be held virtually via Zoom from 21 November – 2 December 2022. It will adopt a two-tiered approach: (i) the first is to provide participants with a good theoretical basis from which to approach the issues, achieved through presentations by experts;

and (ii) a number of open discussions which will allow participants to share their country and own experiences and apply what they have learned.

Each week will address a particular theme. The week 1 will focus on "*Introduction to REDD+ and forest and tree-based mitigation and adaptation action against Climate Change",* while the week 2 will be dedicated to *"Best practices and experience sharing, in implementing REDD+ and other forest and tree-based options in Africa"*. PowerPoint presentations will be delivered to introduce and explain each topic. For additional context, detailed biographies of relevant speakers along with a list of internet resources will be made available to assist those interested in acquiring further information on the subject.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: REDD+ AND BEST PRACTICES INTEGRATING FORESTS AND TREE-BASED MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

Discussion topics

Day	Presentation topic	Short description	Key discussion points	Speaker	Institution	Country
21th	Basic concepts REDD+	The session will help to exchange on the REDD+ concepts, processes framework, policies, financing, and methodologies etc.	- REDD+ concepts - Policies framework related to REDD+ - REDD+ Framework - REDD+ activities - Carbon and Green House accounting - REDD+ key requirements - REDD+ financing - Challenges facing by Africans in implanting REDD+ - Etc.	Achille MOMO	AFF Facilitator	Cameroon
22nd	Stakeholders mobilization, engagement and capacity building (with consideration to Gender and Minority) to implement REDD+ and tree-based projects	The critical role of stakeholders including local populations, private sector, women and minorities in deforestation and their engagement in adopting positive actions. This session aims to present challenges and solutions related to stakeholder engagement their contribution to implementation of adaptation and mitigation actions against Climate Change.	- Who to involve in REDD+, Forest and tree-based initiatives for adaptation and mitigation against Climate change? Who and Why? - What are the barriers and challenges? - Which capacity to provide to stakeholders as to foster their engagement towards implementing REDD+, Forest and tree-based initiatives for adaptation and mitigation against Climate change?	Ghislain Agoum PhD	University of Dschang	Cameroon

Day	Presentation topic	Short description	Key discussion points	Speaker	Institution	Country
		It also focuses on decision making and governance				
23th	Benefits related to REDD+: Contribution to Climate Change mitigation and Adaptation	REDD+ generate a number of services and benefits for people and the environment, knowledge of which would help motivate stakeholder commitment to implementation.	- Ecosystem services - Carbon benefits - Non-Carbon benefit - Socioeconomic benefits - Environmental Benefits - Access to benefits	Lizzie Mujuru	AFF Regional Expert	Zimbabwe
24th	Status of implementation of REDD+ in Africa	The session aims at sharing with participants the status of REDD+ implementation per countries, the issues and challenges faced. It will then serve as opportunities to brainstorm on potential solutions	- REDD+ where are we now? - What are the issues? - What are the main challenges facing by countries? - What are opportunities for countries?	Dr Check Dieng	AFF Regional Expert	Senegal
25th	Synergy between REDD+ and other forest and tree-based initiatives such as AFR100/landscape restoration	REDD+ and AFR100 actually being highly promoted in Africa. What are the differences and synergies between the two approaches?	- AFR100 initiative - The principles of Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) - Differences between REDD+ and AFR100 - Synergies Between REDD+ and AFR100 - Etc.	Achille Momo;	AFF	Cameroon
Week 2: Best practices and experience sharing, in implementing REDD+ and other forest and tree-based options in Africa						
28th	Agroforestry system: a community-based initiative for adaptation and mitigation of Climate Change	Agroforestry seems to be one of the best solutions for adaptation and mitigation to Climate Change in Africa. It	- What is agroforestry - How agroforestry is suitable to adaptation and mitigation to Climate Change?	Afi Attiogbe Christelle	Univesity of Lomé	Togo

Day	Presentation topic	Short description	Key discussion points	Speaker	Institution	Country
		contributes to generate plenty of ecosystem services and other benefits to local communities. It is compatible to almost all the ecosystems in Africa. What agroforestry is all about? To which extend could we consider agroforestry as a solution for adaption and mitigation to Climate	- What advantages from agroforestry? - What challenges are related to implementing agroforestry?			
29th	How a "Zero deforestation" concept in cocoa cultivation contribute to adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change?	Cocoa sector is actually one of the major responsible of degradation and the decreasing of natural forests cover in African Tropical Moist Ecosystem. To reverse the situation, the concept of Zero deforestation cocoa agroforestry is actually being promoted by many organizations to reduce the impact of Cocoa cultivation on natural forest. How Cocoa producer countries could reduce deforestation whilst increasing their cocoa production?	- How the concept of "Zero deforestation" functions in cocoa cultivation? - Contribution of "Zero deforestation" in Cocoa agroforestry to mitigation and adaptation to climate Change, - Challenges related to implementing the concept etc.	Ghislain Mofack	University of Yaounde I	Cameroon

Day	Presentation topic	Short description	Key discussion points	Speaker	Institution	Country
30th	Experience sharing on developing a National System and MRV for REDD+ activities; and /or experience on assessing carbon stocks in peatlands in Congo	Best practices on designing and developing a National forest monitoring system will be shared. Participants will also learn from experience of assessing carbon stocks in a particular ecosystem like the peatlands	What is National Forest Monitoring System? What are the basic principles related to NFMS? What is MRV for REDD+? Which tools to used? Challenges and lessons learned in Assessing Forest carbon stocks in some African forest Ecosystems	Tatiana Nana Yeto Mampouya	MRV and Carbon measurement specialists	Congo
1st of Dec	Brainstorming session:	Key messages from the CoP and way forward Key recommendations from COP 27	What to take home? What next?	Achille MOMO	AFF Facilitator	Cameroon
2nd Dec	Brainstorming session:	Key messages from the CoP and way forward Key recommendations from COP 27	What to take home? What next?	Achille MOMO	AFF Facilitator	Cameroon