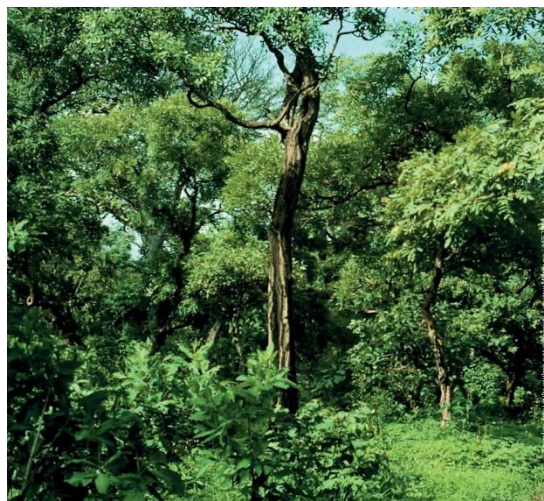




African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Enhancing gender equality in the African forestry sector

(2021-2025)



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Table of Contents

List of tables	4
List of Acronyms	5
1.0 Introduction	6
1.1 The African Forest Forum	7
1.1.1 <i>Vision</i>	7
1.1.2 <i>Mission</i>	7
2.0 Setting the context	8
2.1 Gender and development in Africa.....	8
2.2 Gender and sustainable forest management	9
2.3 Rationale for gender mainstreaming in AFF.....	12
2.3.1 <i>Defining gender mainstreaming</i>	12
2.3.2 <i>Gender equality at AFF</i>	13
2.3.3 <i>AFF Progress in Gender Equality Integration</i>	13
2.3.4 <i>Scope of the Strategy</i>	14
2.3.5 <i>SWOT Analysis</i>	15
3.0 Strategic considerations	17
3.1 Summary recommendations from AFF gender analysis	17
3.2 Strategic focus	20
3.3 Key Result Areas (KRAS)	21
3.4 Operationalization approach	24
3.4.1 <i>Leadership and accountability</i>	24
3.4.2 <i>Role model behavior</i>	24
3.4.3 <i>Monitor review and drive improvement</i>	24
3.4.4 <i>Managing external stakeholders</i>	24
3.4.5 <i>Culture</i>	24
3.4.6 <i>Review of strategy and supporting policies and processes</i>	25
3.4.7 <i>Communications and implementation of the strategy</i>	25
3.4.8 <i>Personnel, knowledge and capabilities</i>	25
3.4.9 <i>Gender architecture</i>	26
3.4.10 <i>Collaboration and knowledge sharing</i>	26
References	27

List of tables

Table 1: Key terms	6
Table 2: SWOT analysis of the African forestry sector	15
Table 3: SWOT analysis of AFF	16
Table 4: Framework of action	22

List of Acronyms

AFDB	African Development Bank
AFF	African Forest Forum
CEDAW	Convention against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GMS	Gender Mainstreaming Strategy
GFPs	Gender Focal Points
ICPD	International Conference for Population Development
KRAs	Key Result Areas
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
OIs	Operational Instructions
PMER	Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
RGTF	Regional Gender Task Force
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN-REDD	United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

1.0 Introduction

In living its mandate, “To contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the people of Africa and the environment they live in through sustainable management and use of tree and forest resources on the African continent” (AFF, 2014 p.4), the African Forest Forum (AFF) strive to ensure that its services and operations reflect the needs of the society comprising of men, women, boys and girls. It is in view of the above that, AFF has sought to improve its institutional and management capacity for mainstreaming gender more effectively in its plans and activities.

AFF is a member-based entity, that seeks to influence and facilitate organizations and people to take actions that lead to forestry compatible development through convening, advocacy, partnership and knowledge brokerage, facilitating capacity development and catalyzing research and development (R&D) that support sustainable forestry and tree resources management. Thus, AFF seeks to do more to deliver on its commitment to provide inclusive and equitable solutions. This strategy, therefore, addresses AFF gender mainstreaming efforts internally as an institution and externally in terms of service delivery.

This strategy is based on a gender audit that was conducted in October 2020 to evaluate ways through which AFF could improve institutional and management capacity for mainstreaming gender more effectively in its plans and activities. Given that AFF has a policy to have proactivity organized in ways that secure gender sensitivity and responsiveness, the gender audit exercise aims to inform AFF as to the extent to which this policy to mainstream gender, has been successful and, how AFF’s activities could be made more inclusive. Based on the findings of the audit, AFF sought to develop a strategy to advance its gender equality objective.

Table 1: Key terms

Gender	Roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time, considers appropriate for men and women
Sex	The physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females
Gender equality	Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women, men, girls and boys; women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female
Gender equity	Refers to “equality of outcomes”: the benefits derived from any policy, intervention, programme, project or activity engaging men and women must be fairly shared between them. Gender equity is about a just and fair treatment of both men and women, while also considering their unique needs, interests, vulnerabilities and social and cultural barriers. Equity, then, is the process of being fair or impartial to men and women and can be defined as a tool for achieving gender equality.
Gender mainstreaming	The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women and girl’s as well as men’ and

	boy's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.
Empowerment of women and girls	Concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives; involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality
Gender Audit	Assessment of the extent to which gender equality is effectively institutionalized in policies, programmes, organizational structures and proceedings (including decision-making processes), and in the corresponding budgets.
Gender Analysis	Gender analysis is a type of socio-economic analysis that uncovers how gender relations affect a development problem and what to do about it

Source UNOPS (2018)

In this strategy Gender Audit and Gender Analysis terms are used interchangeably.

1.1 The African Forest Forum

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, economic and social development and protect the environment.

Through all its programmes and activities, AFF seeks to promote empowerment of all marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, who remain vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and other environmental and economic shocks and whose representation, priorities and needs are seldom addressed adequately in forestry sector plans and activities (AFF, 2020; 2021; 2019; 2017; 2016; 2014; 2009). AFF's policy is to have program and project activities organized in ways that secure gender sensitivity and responsiveness.

1.1.1 Vision

The leading forum that unites all stakeholders in African forestry

1.1.2 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.

2.0 Setting the context

2.1 Gender and development in Africa

Most African countries continue to lag behind the rest of the world on women's and youth participation in development, in large part due to deeply entrenched, discriminatory views about the role and position of women and girls in society, which relegate women to an inferior position relative to men and result in unequal power relations between men and women (Murunga, 2017). These discriminatory views and harmful practices often prevent women from achieving their full potential as productive members of society because, these practices result in women's unequal access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and participation in governance and politics.

Even in countries where women are playing a greater role in development, governance and politics, such as in Kenya, women are treated and judged disparately and more harshly, by institutions as well as the public, in comparison to their male counterparts (ibid). It is in view of the above that starting in the 1950s, the United Nations and other bodies involved with human rights began interrogating the effect of harmful traditional practices on the health and rights of women and advocating for their elimination. These efforts intensified in the 1980s and 1990s and culminated in 1994 at the International Conference for Population and Development (ICPD), where, delegates placed the rights of women and girls at the center of development (Murunga, 2017). Since then a series of international conventions and declarations have been signed to support the progress to gender equality including the Convention Against all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1995; the MDGs, 2000; The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2003; The Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in 2006 to take the continent forward towards the goal of universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in Africa by 2015 including the reduction of gender-based violence; the SDGs, 2015.

Consequently, many of the Governments in Africa have put in place legal frameworks to comply with these international conventions and policies, plans, and programs to ensure equal access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and leadership to advance gender equality. Kenya in particular, has enacted legislations (affirmative action) some of which are constitutionally entrenched to foster gender equality, designated specific ministry for gender, and youth, as well as put in place commissions to regulate gender matters. Rwanda made the biggest gains in women's representation during the last 20 years, with an increase of 60 percentage points (Murunga, 2017). For instance, according to the UN-DPI (2015) MDG report, Sub-Saharan Africa registered the most impressive progress in women's access to paid employment in the non-agricultural sector, increasing from 24 percent to 34 percent from 1990 to 2015. According to Moodley et. al (2019) Africa is leading gender equality in the private sector as well, by increasing the number of women on corporate boards worldwide, in fact one in four board members for African companies are now women; a higher rate than Europe's at 23%. Furthermore UN-DPI (2015) MDG report showed that women in the region are gaining more power in

politics. Furthermore, the proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliament increased from 13 percent in 2000 to 23 percent in 2015, which is not far behind the developed regions (25 percent).

However, the region still lags behind the average for developing countries (35 percent), the world (40 percent), and developed countries (48 percent) (Murunga, 2017). While notable progress has been made to reduce gender inequality and improve women's empowerment in the African region, efforts need to be sustained and intensified since Africa is still far from achieving even 50% progress to gender equality.

According to African Development Bank (AfDB) (2014) while Africa has been growing, economic performance has been mixed and the benefits not evenly distributed. The importance of growth for poverty reduction is undisputed. But for growth to have a positive impact on poverty reduction, it must contribute to lowering inequality. Addressing gender differences to “level the playing field” and enable women as well as men to contribute to and benefit from, social and economic development is at the core of inclusive and sustainable growth in Africa. To achieve gender-inclusive and gender-equitable growth, actions are required in two critical and mutually reinforcing areas. These are: – Ensuring that economic opportunity is gender-inclusive (thereby enabling gender equitable contributions to growth); and – Ensuring that participation in decision-making – at the household, community, and national levels – is gender-inclusive (thereby enabling gender-equitable benefits from growth). Others include strengthening women's legal status and property rights and reducing women's overall work burden (time savings) and addressing gender differentiated roles of men and women in agriculture explicitly, gender-based violence.

2.2 Gender and sustainable forest management

Forest and trees play multiple roles in the landscapes and climate context, by serving a climate mitigation function as carbon sinks, through regulating water, sustaining agriculture and providing livelihoods and energy resources for women and men. Forests support livelihoods directly for over 1.6 billion people, including around 350 million people living in or near dense forests who use forest resources for income and subsistence (World Bank 2009b; FAO 2015; Marin & Kuriakose, 2017). People living near forested areas often have limited access to markets, and thus can be even more dependent on forest livelihood sources (Marin & Kuriakose, 2017).

This is particularly true for women who may rely for up to half of their income on forests, and thus require secure access and use rights to these resources (World Bank 2016; Moss and Swan 2013). In essence sustainable forest management projects seek to decrease forest degradation and deforestation, and simultaneously contribute to poverty reduction and other socioeconomic benefits, e.g., through fostering sustainable production practices and improved access to forest value chains and markets (World Bank 2016). Even with a social lens however, it is possible to overlook the different roles of women and men in forestry, and the impact of gender on issues such as tenure security, resource access, and control over benefits; unless gender analytical considerations are placed front and center from the start. This requires recognizing that

women and men differ in their knowledge, preferences and use of forest resources, and that these preferences shape the priorities and concerns of different groups within forest communities (Colfer et. al 2016).

Further, socio-cultural norms often make it difficult for women to participate in local forest governance as key stakeholders on an equal footing to men, unless project processes are designed to support women's effective participation in forest institutions, such as resource user groups, and in economic production and benefit-sharing processes (Marin & Kuriakose, 2017). Neglecting women's role in forest decision-making can jeopardize project outcomes, as women's specific livelihood needs, and preferences can be overlooked (UN-REDD 2011). It is therefore imperative that in designing and implementing projects, project teams consider aspects such as the type of forest resources available, the legal framework and informal gender norms, power dynamics, economic and domestic roles and sex disaggregated demographics to develop a strategy that supports women in the distinct phases of sustainable forest management projects (Kuriakose, 2017).

For instance, in considering forest-based livelihood projects, it is important to note that often, men control the most valuable forest resources, such as timber that can be sold on the market (Aguilar et al. 2011; FAO 2015; Agarwal 2009). On the other hand, women's control over resources may be more commonly centered on management and use of fuelwood, fodder and non-timber products (Kuriakose, 2017). Likewise, according to Kiptot and Franzel (2012) women and men's user habits differ in parts of the tree and access to certain species is also gendered and in most of the cases, men have the complete authority over the most valuable products. Women tend to have access to products such as fruits, nuts and vegetables, fuel wood, fodder, of which they can process and add value to them; for example, they can produce butter or sauce from the nuts, fruits, and manure. Men control charcoal, timber, poles, large branches and logs (ibid). Generally, men's access and use of forests resources is prioritized over those of women, leaving women in a more vulnerable economic state (Tiayon 2011).

Most countries have incorporated reforms in their legal frameworks to guarantee equal land tenure rights for men and women. However, customary laws still represent a challenge to women's land ownership, which is of particular concern in forest protection, restoration and establishment of tree plantations and woodlots, and agroforestry investments. Land ownership is related to socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. Studies have shown that land rights empower women by improving their control over household income and bargaining power over resource allocation; providing security in case of abandonment, divorce or death; and increasing their participation in the community and institutions (World Bank, 2009).

Women and men have different household responsibilities due to the gender division of labor, which structures their forest priorities and preferences for planting tree species with distinctive characteristics. For example, men tend to engage in high-value activities to provide the household's main income hence they prefer planting trees that offer higher commercial benefits (Kiptot, 2015). On the contrary women are the main caregivers of

children and ill family members and are responsible for providing food, fuel and fodder. Given their social reproduction responsibilities of cooking for the household, women's tree selection is based on their use and relevance for subsistence. Therefore, women prefer trees that provide fruits, firewood, and fodder and increase soil fertility (ibid).

It has also been noted that women's participation in value chains is usually limited to harvesting and small-scale retail trade, while men dominate larger businesses and tend to engage in higher value chains such as those of timber, honey and charcoal.

The regional context also varies in Africa, women dominate the collection of forest products, but in Latin America men are more engaged in this function. As processing become more capital-intensive, or as the scale increases, women's participation tends to decrease. In addition, women's participation also diminishes when the distance to the trading location increases, often due to socio-cultural norms (Ingram et al. 2016). Moreover, women's lack of access to land ownership can hamper access to capital, as well as training and investment in improved processing and production techniques. Collective action and better group organization could also help women to overcome these challenges and facilitate access to resources, venues to commercialize their products, training and loan opportunities (Shackleton et al., 2011).

Women's time poverty and physical safety concerns limit their access to and use of forest resources. Women's work burdens within the household limit the time women can allocate to forestry and agroforestry income-generating activities (Grassi et al 2015; Colfer et al 2014). Security is also a concern for women who are more vulnerable if they travel long distances or travel by themselves (Shackleton et al 2011). Women are frequently engaged in activities that are undervalued, including unpaid family labor and work in the men's fields (Shackleton et al 2011; FAO, n.d.a; Kiptot 2015). Women can face discrimination in the market when marketing their produce directly, and also can be stymied by lack of language skills, access to information or training (Carr 2008; Bandiaky-Badji et al 2016).

Women and men's practices, knowledge and priorities in forest resource use are different. The gender division of labor gives women and men expertise in various parts of the tree and forestry depending on how the activities are distributed between them (Elias 2016). Women tend to participate much more in patrolling in the forest and were more likely to comply with the rules when they were part of the committees. They usually have extensive knowledge about trees that are good for subsistence, food and medicine provision. Also, women know about fuel wood, fodder, biodiversity and improving soil qualities (Colfer et al 2015). Men's priorities, knowledge and activities commonly focus on agriculture, logging, and timber, hunting and fishing. These differences could present economic opportunities for women if they engage in complementary activities.

Women's effective participation in forest decision-making bodies also provides an opportunity to present their concerns, points of views and needs, and incorporate their knowledge in the discussion (Kuriakose, 2017).

Thus in view of the above, sustainable forest management projects with an explicit gender lens can help reduce women's vulnerability by enhancing their socio-economic empowerment; by reducing informality in the production and marketing of non-timber forest products where women dominate; and by promoting legal reforms in land tenure, and institutional development through enhanced training and leadership development for women (Carr 2008; Bandiaky-Badji et al 2016). Increasing women's participation in forest decision-making bodies improves forest sustainability and could give women more opportunities to raise their voices and participate in the policy-making processes.

2.3 Rationale for gender mainstreaming in AFF

Gender and environment are intimately linked as women and men have unique relationships with, dependencies on, and expertise regarding their environments. Gender roles, responsibilities and expectations therefore shape all forms of human relationships to the environment, and the involvement, contribution and role of both men and women, are of paramount importance to the functioning and wellbeing of natural resource dependent communities, although often not well understood. Poor understanding of the distinct roles and contributions of men and women often leads to lack of recognition of their distinct needs and interests in policies and programmes. This lack of recognition can result in failure to meet sustainable livelihood goals in wetland dependent communities.

Gender equality is also recognized as an integral part of the stakeholder empowerment process (AFF, 2014; 2017; 2009), essential for achieving social justice, and for ensuring equitable and sustainable human development for all. Given the interdependence of humans and the environment, men and women's roles, and behavior and attitudes towards the environment differ, and are heavily dependent on local social, political, economic and environmental contexts. In this respect it is considered important that the AFF takes into consideration gender gaps in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluations of projects and its internal processes as well.

2.3.1 Defining gender mainstreaming

Mainstreaming gender or a gender perspective, is the process of assessing the implications for men and women of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs/projects, at all levels. It is a process of making women, as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects in all political, economic and social spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. It is a comprehensive approach, which pertains to all activities related to development and human rights, and ensures that both women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from these. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming therefore involves a process of change or transformation, to form unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women.

As explained in FAO (2011), gender mainstreaming is not about adding women's component or even a gender equality component into an existing project or activity. It goes beyond increasing women's participation to bringing the experience, knowledge and

interest of women and men to bear in the development agenda. Gender mainstreaming recognizes the following key points:

- i) Roles of men and women are interdependent and complimentary; therefore one cannot be changed without also affecting the other.
- ii) Gender issues are not confined to one sector but must be addressed as part of an integrated approach.
- iii) Gender issues are not confined to the population of programme “beneficiaries” but must be addressed also at macro (policy) and meso (institutional/delivery systems) levels.
- iv) Gender issues must be addressed at every stage in the programme cycle, beginning with identification and formulation, and continuing through implementation, monitoring evaluation, and reporting.

2.3.2 Gender equality at AFF

As an organization committed to sustainable implementation, gender equality and gender mainstreaming has long been a key component of AFF’s work. According to AFF’s strategic plans 2015-2020(AFF, 2015) and 2021-2025 (AFF, 2020) the move to mainstream gender and conduct a gender analysis was prompted by the following compelling factors:

- Gender issues are gaining recognition in the forestry sector at national, regional and global levels. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 5 on gender equality and SDG 15 on life on land;
- Women face different challenges due to imbalances in social norms and power relations;
- Women are often excluded from entities responsible for decision making and public policy;
- Women lack equal access to and control over land and natural resources they depend on;
- Women have deep knowledge about the productive activities carried out in the forests, esp. on NTFPs, and are therefore key players in forestry programs.

Furthermore, mainstreaming gender (men, women and youth) will contribute to:

- Positive effects on sustainable management of forests and meeting environmental targets;
- Transformation of unequal gender relations within the forestry sector;
- Achieving social protection of families, communities and national economies;
- Enhancing economic gains, such as access to income through various forest and tree activities undertaken by men, women and youth.

2.3.3 AFF Progress in Gender Equality Integration

According to AFF (2020a) considerable progress has been made in the goal to integrate gender in the organization activities and policies. Some of the examples given include:

- Since its inception, AFF has made deliberate efforts to promote gender equality in her activities;

- In 2014, AFF engaged a gender specialist, at Programme Officer level to guide the evolution of gender in its work;
- In 2015, a staff seminar on gender was organised aimed at achieving a mutual understanding of gender responsive research.

Subsequently,

- ✓ The plans of work and budgets are designed to ensure gender sensitivity and responsiveness as is practicable, for a clearer focus on women and youth;
- ✓ Gender situational analyses and documentation of gender practices is done;
- ✓ Integration of gender specific issues in terms of reference (TORs) for studies;
- ✓ Gender criteria included in experts and students' selection for consultancies and grants
- ✓ Gender representation in meetings and capacity building workshops emphasized

At present the AFF Secretariat staff comprise of 60% women while men are 40%. The Governing Council is comprised of 25% women and 75% men and has a Youth in Forestry Chapter and 'Women in Forestry' Chapter to ensure adequate representation of these constituencies. Further, AFF membership representation stands at 22% women while men represent 78%.

AFF plan of work and budget for AFF Sida and SDC supported projects, further outlines the focus on gender perspectives on expected programme outcomes. Examples of such outcomes include actors in the gums and resins value chain better engaged, especially private sector, women and the youth, for improved well-being.

2.3.4 Scope of the Strategy

This strategy's success will be anchored not only in the corporate systems and processes that are put in place, but also in how well AFF personnel adopt a gender-sensitive approach to the design and implementation of AFF activities. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to mainstreaming gender equality, and different projects in different contexts will require different approaches. AFF will put in place the guidance, training, systems and processes to underpin the achievement of this strategy and strive to replicate projects and their successes. There will always be unique projects that will require AFF to assess and understand the scope, scale and context. Therefore, this strategy will not satisfy every aspect of gender mainstreaming in the complexity of what AFF does and where it is done. It would rather draw on the organization's adaptability, the knowledge and skills of the organization as a whole, and other AFF supporting strategies such as the Knowledge Management Strategy, and Communication Strategy.

Not every project activity will require gender mainstreaming due to the nature of the outputs, or, in some instances, a partner may decide not to include gender mainstreaming within a particular engagement. However, in all such cases the exclusion of gender mainstreaming efforts must be justified before the engagement is accepted and the decision for exclusion lies with the engaging authority. At AFF offices' secretariat there is a wealth of gender expertise and capacity that AFF can tap into.

AFF needs to utilize the resources and tools already available and better tap into the skills and knowledge base within its network. For instance according to the results of the AFF gender audit, there are staff or members who have been trained on gender and others who are good in various aspects of gender. The gender manual already developed is a key tool. Other tools include a gender integration guideline. Moreover, new ways can be created to collaborate, to share knowledge and best practices, and to work together across projects, offices and regions (e.g. Western Africa, Eastern Africa etc.), towards such an important aim.

Personnel, systems and processes will need to be strengthened to make the implementation of this strategy a success. But its real success will be determined by how well AFF can tap into all available resources. Sustainable development is about making sure there is an inclusion of all necessary perspectives in the design and delivery of the solutions so that the needs and rights of beneficiaries are fully considered and embedded in development work. AFF recognizes that various aspects of diversity and inclusion can and should form part of its efforts, and that some of these are not explicitly covered in this strategy (e.g. people with disabilities, etc.). However, many of the benefits that will be realized for women and youth will have a positive ripple effect for many other individuals affected by exclusion, and that this strategy represents a first step in a quest for social inclusion.

2.3.5 SWOT Analysis

Table 2 presents a SWOT analysis of the African forestry sector as outlined in AFF (2020). A SWOT analysis on AFF is presented in Table 3. However due to the limitations of the Covid 19 pandemic, face-to-face meetings and focus group discussions to conduct a SWOT Analysis were affected. The SWOT analysis will need to be re-casted in the gender context.

Table 2: SWOT analysis of African Forestry sector

Strengths of the sector	Weaknesses of the sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Large areas with renewable forest resources; } Existence of institutional infrastructure in most African countries for forest management; } Existence of a corps of professionals in forestry in Africa; } Forestry interfaces with many other sectors of the national economies; } Strongly related to livelihoods and environment } Existence of women and youth groups in the forestry sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Weak governance institutions; } Lack of/limited political awareness and support to the forestry sector; } Insufficient and patchy distribution of human capacity in the sector; } Lack of information on the value and contribution of forest resources in household and national economies; } Lack of/Insufficient regulation of cross-border trade among African countries; } Weak enforcement of forest policy, laws and regulations; } Sector is poorly developed and organized;

Strengths of the sector	Weaknesses of the sector
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Sector is underinvested, therefore requires much more investment than available at present; } Fragility of the forest ecosystem complicates management of the resource; } Unclear land, forest and tree tenure constrains good management and investment in the sector.
Opportunities for the sector	Threats to the sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } High potential to improve the generation of economic benefits of forest and trees; } Increased global awareness/recognition of the role of forests and trees to people and their environmental (climate, water, biodiversity) issues; } Multi-functionality of forests increases their roles and potentials for socio-economic development; } Development of tree resources outside the forest compliments the goods and services from forests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Illegal harvesting and trade of forest resources; } Over exploitation of the forest resources, resulting in unwanted deforestation and degradation; } High population pressure raising demand for forest goods and services as well as for forest land leading to conversion of forest lands into agricultural lands, and degradation of the resources; } Inappropriate pricing of forest products and services (denying sellers and governments revenues), some do not even have a market price; } Unplanned use of forest resources; } Failure to develop agricultural productivity as a way of reducing pressure on forestland.

Source: AFF (2020)

Table 3: SWOT analysis of AFF

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Membership is voluntary, and members are willing and committed to forestry development (i.e. volunteers, willingness and commitment); } Independent and non-political; } The membership contains considerable expertise, both in width and depth; } Diversity of memberships (professional, geographical and linguistic); } Growing recognition of AFF and its work; } Accountability of AFF to its membership and other stakeholders like development partners is very good; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Understaffed Secretariat; } Young organization; } Dependence on others for funds and facilities; } Weak representation from private sector.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Achievements of AFF are widely known and appreciated; } Strong and growing partnerships with relevant international and regional institutions. } Presence of gender focal point } Political Will to mainstream gender 	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Growing recognition and increased resources for its planned activities will increase impacts; } Replicate the success of Technical Support Team (TST) at UNFF in other organizations; } General goodwill in and outside the AFF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Existing and potential competitors dealing with the same issues, collaborators/stakeholders and donors; } Potential vulnerability to division based on language barriers in Africa, viz. across Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone divisions; Sustainability of funding

Source AFF (2020)

3.0 Strategic considerations

This section picks from the key results of the gender audit presented below, and links with the SWOT analysis presented in chapter two above as well as the contextual analysis, to map out key strategic areas for gender mainstreaming in AFF.

3.1 Summary recommendations from AFF gender analysis

The AFF Gender Audit, which was conducted in October 2020, provided useful information in validating the content of this strategy and provided some key recommendations that together shaped the gender mainstreaming strategy. The prevailing socio-economic environment in which AFF operates presents some challenges in relation to living conditions of youth, women and men and the community as a whole. Women and youth bear a disproportionately larger burden of the social problems such as unemployment and poverty that is exacerbated by traditional practices, attitudes and beliefs. Lack of social capital, lack of livelihood assets, and poor access to knowledge and skills to develop new opportunities, are considered contributing factors (AFF 2021).

There are two key challenges for addressing gender equality: First, the importance of gender power relations and secondly, access to information that can strengthen the capacity of women and youth. With respect to the latter, there is a need for AFF to strengthen gender-focused policies at AFF and on the ground and strengthen linkages vertically as well as horizontally. This can be done by building the capacity of women's groups, by improving their access to knowledge, information and management and in

particular with regards to forestry-based livelihoods. Such livelihood streams as wood processing, marketing and trade (including SMEs), charcoal value chains, NTFPs value chains like those on gum and resins.

According to the results of the survey, there was basic understanding of gender among staff and partners of AFF based on the responses received. In addition, the results revealed an admission by staff that gender equality does have a bearing on their daily work. However, in regard to technical aspects such as gender analysis and gender integration there were noted gaps. According to the survey, the major challenges in gender mainstreaming included inadequate gender training, limited understanding of analysis and the lack of gender analysis tools, inadequate gender prioritizing at organization level and inadequate resources to support gender integration activities.

There is need for capacity building in this regard, to upscale staff capacity in gender mainstreaming. Both AFF and partner organizations need to provide not only training but also operational tools such as gender integration manuals or guides, gender analysis tool kit, gender responsive budgeting guides, monitoring and evaluation frameworks to aid in this process. Also important in ensuring that this happens, AFF needs to work on improving resource allocation to gender priorities.

In general, it is considered important to raise awareness on policies, constitution, laws and the various international instruments concerning the rights and interests of women and youth, by organizing seminars, workshops, and trainings, and disseminating information and advocating through various kinds of media. To aid this process AFF should consider availing tools such as gender integration project guides, gender analysis tool kits, gender responsive budgeting guide and training manuals.

In addressing gender at service delivery level it is important for AFF to better understand the influence of local institutions and socio-cultural norms and customs in shaping women's and youth's capacity to engage. Specifically, opportunities should be sought to strengthen the effectiveness of the women and youth through capacity building of leaders and members, and if possible, catalyze the provision of capital assets for investments in community development programmes that support the overall objectives of sustainable forestry management, conservation and social empowerment of women and youth. Examples include in wood processing, fruit and nuts, marketing and trade including SMEs, charcoal value chains, NTFPs value chains such as gums and resins.

Gender parity in AFF has seen a gradual positive growth with deliberate measures to increase gender representation at the Secretariat, in meetings and capacity building workshops. According to the AFF presentation on gender mainstreaming progress attained AFF Secretariat features a higher representation of women as compared to men even though the Governing Council and membership of women in AFF form a much lower percentage (AFF, 2020a). The overall strategy for promoting gender equality in AFF and its partners should be hinged on promoting the advancement of women and youth and the implementation of policy on gender equality and to raise the role of women in both governance (the Governing Council and its committees), and social positions at all levels.

Going forward, AFF will need to consider a review or development of organizational policies that would support the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the institution and in its activities. These include but are not limited to the Strategic plan to enable integration of gender specific objectives, the *modus operandi*, and the human resources management manual/policy.

Even though there is increase in women and youth participation in management, decision-making in the forestry sector in the recent past, there is currently a poor level of understanding, engagement and participation in decision-making and management of forestry resources across Africa by women (AFF, 2020a, 2020b). Added to this, the prevailing social norm and perception that 'technical matters' such as forestry resources management is a male domain/ interest and concern, and not the domain/ interest of women, largely because most of its operations are manual and involving lots of energy and are implemented in faraway forests that could also be dangerous in terms of wild animals. Accessibility to these resources and technology continues to wear down this perception. Further, it should be noted that based on the survey it is apparent that women hold significant knowledge of forestry resources (AFF 2020a, 2020b) that should be considered in planning long-term management and livelihood development opportunities based on these resources.

Across Africa, national laws and land tenure policies are considered significant milestones for protecting women's rights. Conjugal land property requires both the names of the spouses by law, providing significant social security to women and men. It is important that AFF and partners in conjunction with forestry and land management authorities engage in designating and regulating land and forests use for conservation/ protection as well as for livelihood purposes. In so doing it is equally important to continue to support the land titling process to protect the rights of wetland resource dependent communities, both men and women. As part of its media campaign AFF needs to prioritize key gender and forestry issues and plan advocacy campaigns for them. These may include increasing women and girls' interest in Science Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), addressing land use and land rights and resource allocation. In addition, there is need to develop communication, media and advocacy guidelines to guarantee gender equality responsive campaigning. Questions could include, how can we reach women, men, boys and girls better? How can our messages better reflect the aspirations of these groups?

In integrating gender in service delivery (AFF projects) and with respect to livelihoods development, it is considered important to work with the forestry sectors across to promote and create conditions for women that improve their production knowledge, develop their labor skills and encourage the processing of forestry products as commodities, with the aim to reduce the burden of work on women through good production practices, create more job opportunities for women and contribute to family income. AFF in collaboration with like-minded organizations, and in liaison with forestry agencies/authorities need to consider advocacy for enactment of favorable policies in this regard.

AFF partnership policy, once developed, will go a long way to clarify AFF's standing in relation to gender equality issues and how AFF will associate with partners who share a common interest. AFF needs to encourage partners to upscale their capacity to integrate gender equality in joint ventures as well as their own operations.

A robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework that includes mandatory baseline survey disaggregated data for every project should be an essential tool in planning projects for gender impact. Such a tool would ideally elaborate the indicators and outcomes that show how a project is changing the lives of men, women, boys and girls.

Intricately linked with the M&E framework is the need for a gender mainstreaming support architecture right across the African region in the name of gender focal points and task forces to support implementation of the gender strategy. This includes having a gender person at the secretariat together with a gender focal point and encouraging the same in partner organizations. In addition, AFF should have in place regional gender task forces across the regions of operation in the continent. The TORs of such task forces could revolve around backstopping, and this can be achieved on voluntary basis hence no financial implication.

3.2 Strategic focus

A Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) is proposed to enhance AFF's capacity to mainstream gender and to provide a more conducive enabling environment to support this effort. The focus of the GMS is on addressing architectural, institutional, contextual and environmental constraints that cause persistent disadvantages for women and youth, and to a lesser extent men, in both macro and microeconomics. To do so requires an analysis of how the roles of men and women interplay through supply and demand factors that result in gender differentials in labor market participation. As observed by other actors such as FAO (2017) a pre-requisite for this is to bring the perspectives, experiences and interests of both women and men to bear in shaping the development agenda.

As reiterated by FAO (2017), a clear message to partners and project teams that gender analysis and strategies are an essential part of project development will counter the tendency to 'add-on' a gender perspective later in the development process and avoid the risk of gender equity being marginalized and no resources being allocated to enable a gender-mainstreamed approach.

This requires mechanisms to integrate gender equality objectives into organization policy dialogues and agendas, align with other policy mandates, undertake quality research, data and analysis, provide specific interventions and clarify roles and responsibilities for gender equality outcomes on the part of all AFF stakeholders.

It will also require increasing institutional capacity, accountability and monitoring, setting budgetary and programming priorities for AFF and its partners so that adequate resources are allocated for gender.

Gender mainstreaming will lead to:

- Greater awareness and understanding among constituents and those involved with AFF operations of international instruments and local legislation and policies for gender equity;
- Supportive policies and improved enforcement mechanisms for gender equality and non-discrimination;
- Improved gender sensitivity in macro and micro-economic policies and labour market policies;
- Improved quality of employment overall, with a focus on female-dominated sectors, such as the informal sector;
- Stronger alliances between constituents who are concerned with improving the economic status of poor women and men and the reduction of child labour;
- Improved access for poor women in particular to productive resources such as credit, improved technology and markets;
- Better gender balanced training policies with an emphasis on expansion of occupational choices for women and men;
- Improved access to social security and social protection for poor women and men.

3.3 Key Result Areas (KRAS)

Table 4 below provides a framework for action for three Key Result Areas

- i) Strengthening internal AFF mechanisms (policy and processes);
- ii) Capacity building and leadership development among AFF staff and constituents and;
- iii) Demonstrate field projects for modeling gender mainstreaming approaches.

Key Result Area 1: *To strengthen internal mechanisms (policies and processes) for gender mainstreaming within AFF.*

This would be achieved particularly through internal capacity building and strengthening of mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in policy and programming activities in forestry. Internal capacity speaks to AFF staff skills and knowledge in various aspects of gender mainstreaming. It also points to having in place supportive policies that aid in the mainstreaming processes (see 3.4.6 below).

Key Result Area 2: *To strengthen the commitment, leadership and capacity for gender mainstreaming among AFF constituency.*

This would be actioned through the provision of support for strategic planning, technical assistance and advice, research, training, seminars, social dialogue and alliance building on forestry related initiatives. In addition to strengthening internal capacity, facilitating improvement in gender mainstreaming capacity among partners will have positive impacts in cultivating unity of purpose.

Key Result Area 3: *To demonstrate model programmes for gender mainstreaming through generic sectoral activities with partners*

Demonstrative initiatives that would illustrate to partners the importance of gender mainstreaming are key and would trigger catalytic effects in impact. An example of gender mainstreaming project aimed to reduce poverty among women and youth considering the causes of rampant poverty in these groups would entail a combination intervention. For instance, to increase the participation and benefits of agroforestry activities to women and

youth could include credit facilities to address the issue of lack of access to collateral amongst the women and youth. Sensitization of communities on retrogressive gender practices could also be included. These are gender-responsive and pro-poor interventions that impact on planning, policy processes and service delivery in the forestry sector.

Table 4: Framework of action

Key outcomes	Action required
<i>KRA 1: To strengthen internal mechanisms for gender mainstreaming within AFF</i>	
Internal mechanisms (Policy and process): AFF will have strengthened institutionalized measures to address the specific needs of all people, including women, men, girls and boys, in every relevant engagement	Develop and implement a comprehensive internal capacity building programme based on a training needs assessment for gender analysis and mainstreaming in AFF's work
	Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan and guidelines on gender
	If necessary, review the AFF strategic plan to ensure integration of gender specific goals aligned with achievable objectives
	Develop and implement specific gender related activities and budgets
	Generate and maintain up to date sex-disaggregated databases to support project planning
	Improve procedures and mechanisms to increase gender responsiveness of programmes and projects, including the identification of gender-mainstreamed objectives, outputs, activities and indicators in projects
	Develop contextualized checklists, templates, guidelines and other tools and adapt for use to help staff and consultants in integrating gender analyses into their work: gender integration project guide, gender analysis tool kit
	Establish a register of gender specialists for short-term contracts across specific areas of expertise
	Develop or review communication guidelines to ensure gender responsiveness
	Ensure that relevant publications and promotional materials incorporate a gender perspective through use of AFF standard contextualized checklists, templates, guidelines and other tools.
	Develop or review partnership guidelines to ensure gender responsiveness
	Implement a gender architecture composed of gender teams at AFF and regional taskforces to support implementation of the gender strategy
<i>KRA 2: To strengthen the commitment, leadership and capacity for gender mainstreaming among AFF's constituency.</i>	

Key outcomes	Action required
AFF will have strengthened institutional capacity and commitment, to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities in forestry.	Encourage partners to undertake gender mainstreaming within their organizations.
	Create awareness and understanding among constituents and those involved with AFF operations of international instruments and local legislation and policies for gender equity in forestry
	Identify mechanisms for improving the provision of advice, information and research findings and other promotional activities to promote gender equality to constituents in line with their priority areas on forestry.
	Facilitate provision of TOT and other capacity building activities for constituents according to needs identification undertaken with stakeholders through targeted seminars, workshops and conferences
	Identify specific strategies with constituents to support increased representation of women in decision-making positions within their organizations
	Develop or enhance mechanisms whereby relevant seminars and round tables organized with constituents systematically incorporates gender analysis and a gender mainstreaming approach to inform agenda setting and recommendations arising from such fora.
<i>KRA 3: To demonstrate model programmes for gender mainstreaming through generic sectoral activities with partners</i>	
AFF and Partners deliver for impact through demonstrated models for gender mainstreaming approaches by integrating gender equality considerations into all relevant projects from initiation to closure.	Conduct feasibility study into options for model gender mainstreaming project(s) in priority sectoral area(s) at national and sub-national level (e.g. poverty alleviation planning, SME promotion, cooperatives, youth employment, and child labor). An example is integration of women and youth in agroforestry interventions through development of SACCO products for this group.
	Strengthen capacity for gender mainstreaming of partners
	Implement a strategy to disseminate processes, outcomes and lessons learnt from the model project(s)
	Identify and prioritize key issues affecting women and youth in the African region and roll out advocacy plans for the same

These objectives will be achieved in tandem with existing internal initiatives that align with AFF approach to sustainable forestry management. Whenever possible, efforts will be made to streamline these activities with other sustainability initiatives to ensure that change is realistic and achievable.

3.4 Operationalization approach

In articulating and implementing AFF strategic focus for gender mainstreaming, the following principles will underpin the approach:

3.4.1 Leadership and accountability

The Gender team together with management will champion, support and monitor the implementation of this strategy however, its success will require leadership of AFF projects.

3.4.2 Role model behavior

All AFF project managers will be held accountable for ensuring that all the planned initiatives are put into action and that the people under their supervision understand their commitment to the objectives of this strategy, as well as their own contribution. AFF personnel at all levels are expected to demonstrate role model behaviour in the promotion and consideration of gender equality in all AFF activities, projects and programmes. Gender responsive behavior of management, which entails commitment to supporting gender initiatives, will set the pace for gender mainstreaming in AFF.

3.4.3 Monitor review and drive improvement

The goals for gender mainstreaming will be integrated into AFF management results framework and targets. The Gender team will provide quarterly situation reports on progress and will monitor and regularly review the progress of this strategy. The Unit will provide analysis and insight at organization level, as well as advice on how to refine the organization's approaches. The Gender team will inform project managers on progress made on the strategy and advice on the results and potential new actions. AFF project managers will be responsible for regularly driving improvements through the implementation of the strategy and for providing feedback to the Gender team and other relevant constituencies.

3.4.4 Managing external stakeholders

AFF works with partners and donors, many of whom have their own gender equality and mainstreaming policies, strategies, processes and resources. Taking into consideration existing policies on gender that apply to the broader project context, AFF based on its performance monitoring mechanism needs to advocate for all engagements with its partners to consider gender equality and must collaborate with partners to develop solutions that meet and consider the needs of all end-users comprising of men women boys and girls. In line with this thinking, AFF will continue to monitor the expectations of its key stakeholders, revising this strategy when and where appropriate. AFF will also continue to create and explore new ways to collaborate with gender networks, to share knowledge and best practices, and to work together across projects, to design and implement more inclusive solutions.

3.4.5 Culture

Leadership will be required at all levels to drive the cultural change needed to make this strategy successful. Existing and new policies, processes, tools and resources should be communicated to all personnel. Leaders are expected to ensure the success of this strategy and adherence to related policies and their effective and systematic use by motivating and raising the performance of their teams vis-à-vis gender equality.

3.4.6 Review of strategy and supporting policies and processes

AFF needs to strengthen its approaches with the aim of enhancing its internal control mechanisms. Assuming that the Gender team has a thorough understanding of the processes that support the organization's policies, together with the management they will build on this knowledge to ensure successful deployment of the policies necessary to implement this strategy. AFF could revise their respective policies on project implementation and could continue to develop relevant Operational Instructions (OIs) and related work processes to support the implementation of this strategy. Within the set of OIs include:

- i) Project Management, underpinned by the Project Management Manual that provides the basis for managing successful projects. It will be fundamental for ensuring projects are designed and governed to deliver on this strategy.
- ii) The Procurement Policies and Manual, which also support the delivery of gender equality through the implementation of AFF projects.
- iii) Monitoring and evaluation framework
- iv) Finance operations Manual
- v) Human Resources Manual
- vi) Communication strategy
- vii) Knowledge management strategy
- viii) Strategic Plan

As part of this strategy, AFF will advocate for and encourage these partners to achieve the same ambitions on gender equality. AFF could provide advice and guidance to its partners to support their efforts.

3.4.7 Communications and implementation of the strategy

The AFF leadership should communicate widely the importance of achieving the targets set out in this strategy, both from a principled as well as operational perspective and, they could continue to do so during its implementation. Key stakeholders, in particular, the governing council will be updated on the progress that is being made. AFF through its communications strategy could support the rollout of this strategy within the organization. This will ensure that all personnel remain informed on progress. The communication's strategy will also support and elevate awareness of AFF efforts externally. Additionally, the communications strategy will give personnel across the organization the opportunity to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the actions being taken through 'pulse' surveys. The Gender Team should track AFF progress against the agreed objectives and targets.

3.4.8 Personnel, knowledge and capabilities

AFF personnel are the organization's most critical assets and should therefore be empowered to become effective agents of change through training and provision of gender integration tools.

Achievement of the objectives set within this strategy depends upon the commitment and support of AFF personnel at all levels of the organization. Through enhanced learning opportunities, AFF will empower personnel to become the champions it needs, to drive change. Gender should be a crosscutting theme in the AFF Knowledge Management Strategy and a focus area for AFF learning and development initiatives.

3.4.9 Gender architecture

AFF could put in place a gender team (Gender Focal Points-GFP) to build capacity in mainstreaming gender quality in the institution, and to help ensure that the skills and knowledge feed into the development of engagements, project management, procurement, finance, human resources and other practices. GFPs could be composed of the Gender Lead and programme managers. At regional level there could be one regional task force or several other task forces depending on the number of regions of operation (East Africa, West Africa etc.) and what is viable. The Regional Task Force could comprise of individuals from among staff and members voluntarily tasked to provide back stopping services to gender work. These teams will be important in supporting the delivery of outputs for AFF and its partners. These task forces will provide more specialized knowledge and best practice sharing across the regions and will enable greater and more effective support to AFF with the application of corporate tools and resources, including the use of gender specialists. These Regional Gender teams will in turn be supported by the AFF GFP and will be responsible for supporting the development of policies, tools and resources. The GFP will meet on a regular basis to provide progress updates to the organization, which will be captured and reported by the project teams.

3.4.10 Collaboration and knowledge sharing

Collaboration and knowledge sharing in AFF and between AFF and partners is crucial for sustained success. Collaboration is expected to take place through the Gender focal points network as identified above as well as through other corporate initiatives such as knowledge management mechanisms. External collaboration and knowledge sharing is also important to enable AFF to be informed about new developments and best practices outside the organization.

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