



UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



UN
environment
programme

Terms of Reference

Online regional facilitator for a Community of Practice on:

Unlocking sustainable solutions for effective

REDD+ Result Based Payments in Africa

March 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. 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 eradicate poverty, promote gender equality, economic and social development and stability of the environment.

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD) is the UN knowledge and advisory platform on the forest solutions to the climate crisis. The goal of UN-REDD is to help realise forest solutions to the climate emergency by avoiding carbon emissions and fostering carbon sequestration, through the promotion of approaches that ensure the environmental integrity of carbon emissions reductions while supporting non-carbon benefits such as safeguarding biodiversity, supporting local livelihoods, and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.

The AFF in partnership with UN-REDD is implementing a three-year project entitled: *“Strengthening REDD+ implementation in Africa: capitalizing on lessons learned for an evolving environment - a UNREDD-AFF partnership”* supported by the Switzerland contribution to UNREDD Africa Technical Assistance. The overall goal of the project is to strengthen African countries' capacities and knowledge through UNREDD's REDD+ specific expertise and the convening power of AFF, its network, regional expertise, and local knowledge, thereby increasing political dialogue and policy change, as well as integration of REDD+ across policy sectors and sustainable development strategies.

The project is guided by two objectives, which are to: (i) strengthen African countries' REDD+ capacities and knowledge; and (ii) enhance sectoral policy coordination to guide appropriate REDD+ strategies and decision-making. The current activity will contribute to the first project's objective by strengthening capacities and facilitating knowledge exchange among African forestry stakeholders on REDD+ result-based payment and carbon markets.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Recent evidence emphasizes the potential of forest landscapes as the most important nature-based solutions to address the climate crisis, as well as providing opportunities for supporting livelihoods, national economies, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Unfortunately, the Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use (AFOLU) sector has been receiving a very small share of the total climate finance (about 2.5% in 2021). Globally, although credits from forestry and land use projects are consistently in high demand, financing for activities generating forest-based solutions remains insufficient, especially in terms of increasing actions, staying on track of the Paris agreement and containing biodiversity loss. Among the three main categories of forest related climate solutions, REDD+ has been attracting most of the nature-based solutions' carbon credits. Moreover, carbon credits from nature-based projects are priced at premium compared to technology-based projects.

With a forest cover estimated at 624 million ha, Africa is expected to significantly contribute to a predicted forest-based mitigation potential of between 4.1 – 6.5 GtCO₂e by 2030. This is despite the little success of recent efforts to curb tropical deforestation which saw Africa experiencing the largest rate of net forest loss of about 4 million ha yearly over the last decade. And this could have been precipitated by some of the challenges facing the forestry sector in Africa that include conflicting and competing land use policies, unsustainable planning and practices, low priority in public budgeting, and lack of incentives in reducing demand for deforestation-linked commodities, in addition to weak implementation of sustainable production practices.

In the recent past, African countries have been receiving increasing attention for their potential contribution to nature-based solutions to the climate crisis and biodiversity loss. However, the recognition and financing of the forest-related solutions in addressing the climate crisis, are still slow-moving. The global distribution of issuance and retirement of carbon credits from 2021 to 2023 indicates a paltry share of 12% for Africa through 91 projects including 38 in the various forestry categories. Although REDD+ remains the most heavily invested carbon project category worldwide, only 21% of REDD+ credits have been issued for Africa. More specifically, it has been observed that the economic and environmental potentials associated with the successful implementation of REDD+ are yet to be realized for many African countries.

In this regard, strengthening the understanding of the REDD+ international finance (upfront) and markets mechanisms (results-based) is of paramount important in facilitating well-informed decision-making processes, as well as enabling African countries to diversify their funding sources and eventually catalyse climate mitigation in the forestry sector. Armed with such information and skills, the continent can access the highly evolving climate finance opportunities and initiatives such as Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Financing (LEAF), Forest and Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), Bio carbon fund, Green Climate Fund, as well as private sectors' financial investments, among others. Crucially, the production of high-integrity carbon credits that address and respect safeguards in the implementation of REDD+ strategies, could serve as a credible pathway to unlock the much-needed financing that would be transformative for the continent.

One of the actions recommended by African REDD+ stakeholders from the learning lab co-organised by AFF and UNEP in 2023 was the call for support for capacity-building initiatives tailored to each country's needs and level of progress, to enable them to overcome the obstacles that prevent the region from accessing the REDD+ finance, including both upfront and results-based payments. Despite the general need for capacity building for almost all countries, it is worth noting that countries are at different levels regarding progress achieved in implementing REDD+; some countries are well advanced in the REDD+ process with experience in result-based payments and could share experience and best practices with countries still fulfilling the readiness phase.

In this regard, Communities of Practice (CoPs) can serve as an efficient and easily accessible way for peer-to-peer sharing of countries' knowledge, experiences, expertise and lessons learned to unlock sustainable solutions for REDD+ result-based payment in Africa.

1.2 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE WORK

In the context of the 2024 annual work plan of the AFF-UNREDD partnership project on “*Strengthening REDD+ implementation in Africa: capitalizing on lessons learned for an evolving environment*” AFF is recruiting one **regional expert to moderate an online Community of Practice (CoP) on “Unlocking sustainable solutions for effective REDD+ Result Based Payments in Africa”**. The CoP will be hosted on a conducive Howspace platform and will involve both webinar series and web-based interactions. The **online moderator is expected to encourage / engage and guide stakeholders to attend the webinar series and the web-based discussions and share** their knowledge, experiences and best practices on REDD+ process and REDD+ finance. At the end of each session, the moderator will synthesize views, lessons and recommendations to be posted on the CoP’s Howspace, easily accessible to all community members.

The CoP is expected to catalyze a good understanding of REDD+ finance types and sources, as well as a better knowledge of the result-based financing architecture including carbon markets and associated standards. The event will also provide a platform for sharing of knowledge products tailored to better address specific capacity needs of African countries.

1.3 SCOPE OF WORK

The key tasks of this assignment are as follows:

- i) in collaboration with AFF and UN-REDD, develop a concept note and elaborate a programme for the CoP, including topics for the online discussion forum;
- ii) Promote the CoP, identify a wide range of stakeholders and start engaging them on the “Howspace” platform at least one week before the webinar sessions;
- iii) Work with AFF Secretariat and UN-REDD to tailor discussion topics in line with the thematic area of the CoP as well as the project outcomes.
- iv) Identify and engage a broad range of stakeholders including relevant networks, individuals, and institutions with specific expertise and experiences on REDD+ process and REDD+ finance, then invite them to participate to enrich the online discussion;
- v) Develop, in collaboration with AFF, UN-REDD and selected resource persons, daily presentations on the selected topics to guide the online discussion;
- vi) Actively guide the discussion to ensure it remains focused on the agenda, address all discussion questions and at the end of each session, draft and post a daily summary note.
- vii) Daily tasks of the CoP’s moderator, to be done during the 2 to 3 hours daily webinar sessions starting from the **25th March 2024 for 2 weeks** include:
 - a. Welcome participants to the virtual discussion;
 - b. Introduce the topic, prepare, and deliver presentations and/or facilitate their delivery by identified guest speakers and drive discussions to address any open/pending issues.
 - c. Provide encouragement/energizer to drive the discussion when no contributions have been posted, by posing/fielding questions, contacting members directly through the platform, posting complementary content such as documents, websites, and text.

- VIII) Propose and discuss with the CoP members plausible approaches and a strategy to sustain interactions on the platform after the two-weeks' webinar series
- IX) Continue the moderation of the discussions among community's members on the web based Howspace at least two weeks after the end of the webinar series guided by the proposed sustainability strategy.
- X) Document key issues raised, and actions proposed from the CoP members.

1.4 DELIVERABLES

This assignment aims to deliver the following:

- Useful resources for the e-discussion uploaded and shared regularly.
- Daily summaries of the e-discussions
- A strategy and action plan to sustain interactions and peer-to-peer learning among the community after the webinar sessions.
- final report of the assignment to be submitted one week after the end of the COP sessions.

1.5 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

The online discussion moderators must have the following qualifications and skills:

- At least a master's degree in forestry or natural resource management with experience in climate change and climate finance, a PhD will be an added advantage.
- At least five years' working experience in sustainable forest management in the context of climate change as well as in climate and forest finance;
- Have proven writing skills with experience in writing technical reports and the like, on topics related to sustainable forest management, climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Excellent writing and oral communication skills in English. Knowledge of French is an additional advantage.
- Experience in moderating CoPs, climate negotiation, multi-stakeholders' participatory actions or events are desirable.

1.6 DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

The work is expected to take one (1) calendar month, commencing on **18 March 2024**. The online regional facilitator will work from own location but be in close consultation with relevant staff at the AFF Secretariat while keeping to an agreed delivery schedule.

1.7 DEADLINES

- (i) Applications must be received by the AFF Secretariat on or before **14 March 2024**.
- (ii) Consultancy activities must begin no later than **18 March 2024**.

1.8 HOW TO APPLY

Please email your application to AFF, attaching: (a) A cover letter stating how you meet the above qualifications and experience requirements; (b) An updated CV. Indicate the subject line: "**Consultancy: Online regional facilitator for a Community of Practice on Unlocking sustainable solutions for effective REDD+ Result Based Payments in Africa**" to d.gitonga@CIFOR-ICRAF.org with a copy to m.avana@CIFOR-ICRAF.org, exec.sec@afforum.org. Only successful applicants will be contacted.