

**Regional Knowledge Exchange Workshop on:
Strengthening REDD+ implementation and integration across sectoral development policies and
strategies: taking stock of achievements and lessons learned from selected African countries.**

Abidjan, 3-4 June 2024

Learning Lab on Strengthening Social Inclusion in REDD+ Implementation

Abidjan, 5-6 June 2024

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) in partnership with the African Forest Forum (AFF) and the Nangui Abrogoua University in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, are organizing a dual event to support the REDD+ implementation in African Countries. The event involves a Regional Knowledge Exchange on achievements and lessons learned from selected African REDD+ countries; and a Learning Lab on Strengthening Social Inclusion in REDD+ Implementation in Africa.

Knowledge Exchange on “Strengthening REDD+ implementation and integration across sectoral development policies and strategies: taking stock of achievements and lessons learned from selected African countries.”

Date and time: Monday and Tuesday, 3rd to 4th June 2024, 08:30 – 17:30 (GMT)

Location : Hôtel le Vaisseau, Abidjan

Background

African forests are crucial part of the nature-based solutions to combating global warming and thus meeting the Paris Agreement targets. However, despite recent attempts to address tropical deforestation by decreasing the demand for deforestation-linked products and promoting sustainable practices, the rate of forest cover loss, for the period 2010-2020, hits four million ha yearly in Africa (FRA, 2020).

Many African countries have embraced REDD+ (Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, including enhancement of carbon stocks from forests and other land uses) as a key mitigation strategy in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and other land Use) sector with adaptation benefits as well as result-based payment mechanism. However, their potential to fully tap into the economic and environmental rewards resulting from implementation and investment in REDD+ remains highly unexplored. While some countries have been progressing gradually with a few advancing to phase 3 of REDD+¹, making them eligible for result-based payments, most of them are still at different stages of the readiness phase. Despite these varying performances in REDD+ implementation, African countries have demonstrated distinct experiences, approaches and challenges in their REDD+ journey, especially for the key areas of capacity and knowledge gaps previously identified by the African Forest Forum (AFF) and the UN-REDD Programmes. These areas include REDD+ finance, carbon markets, social inclusion, deforestation-free agriculture as well as governance frameworks for sharing REDD+ benefits.

¹ The three REDD+ phase: **Phase 1: Readiness phase** - Developing national strategies or action plans, policies, measures, and capacity building; **Phase 2: Implementation phase** - Enacting REDD+ actions and national strategies or plans, which may involve further capacity building, technology development, and transfer; **Phase 3: Results-based phase** - Fully measuring, reporting, and verifying results-based actions.

In the framework of their partnership with UN-REDD, AFF commissioned national consultations in selected African countries in 2023, with the aim to take stock of countries' differentiated achievements and document challenges and lessons learned. For the 2024 workplan, AFF and partners are organising a Regional Knowledge Exchange Workshop.

The aim of the workshop is to share and validate key findings from the national consultations, facilitate peer to peer sharing of experiences, co-generate best practices that could help tailor knowledge products to meet the specific capacity needs of African nations and improve efficiency in REDD+ implementation.

Objectives

The objectives of the regional exchange workshop are as follows:

- Share, discuss, strengthen, and validate findings from national consultations.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange among the target audience, including from countries not covered by the national consultations and document best practices, success factors and gaps on REDD+ implementation in Africa.
- Co-identify areas for future interventions by AFF and UN-REDD to enhance implementation and investments in REDD+ and other forest-related nature-based solutions in Africa.
- Promote stakeholder dialogue, networking, and collaboration.

Outcomes

Expected outcomes include:

- Findings from national consultations are shared, strengthened, and validated by diverse stakeholder groups with actionable insights to advance countries' REDD+ agenda.
- Key messages, best practices and lessons learned are formulated to guide capacity building for enhanced implementation of REDD+ in Africa.
- Networks are strengthened for sustained South-South dialogue and collaboration on REDD+ implementation in Africa.
- Key areas of capacity and knowledge gaps prioritised for future interventions by AFF and UN-REDD

Agenda

Regional Knowledge Exchange - Day 1: 3 rd June 2024			
Time	Activity	Speaker	Moderators
8:30 – 9:00	Arrival and Registration		
9:00 – 9:30	Introduction and welcome remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions of participants • Welcome Address from African Forest Forum • Remarks from UNREDD • Opening remarks • Background and objectives of the Regional Exchange Workshop 	All Labode Popoola, Executive Secretary, AFF Mami R., UNEP Guest of Honour, President of Nangui Abrogoua University ML. Tientcheu, AFF	Daphine Gitonga, Head of KMCOMM, AFF
9:30 – 10:30	State of REDD+ implementation in Africa: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights from the AFF assessment and insights from 2022 UN-REDD knowledge exchange. • Discussions 	ML A. Tientcheu & A. Momo	E. KESSE, S.P. REDD+ Cote d'Ivoire
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break and networking		

11:00 – 13:00	Stocktaking of African countries achievements in implementing REDD+: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Côte d’Ivoire • Democratic Republic of Congo, • Ethiopia • Discussions 	National consultants	Tessa Boateng, Forestry Commission Ghana
13:00 -14:00	Lunch break and networking		
14:00 – 16:00	Stocktaking of African countries achievements in implementing REDD+: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenya, • Republic of Congo, • Uganda • Discussions and experience sharing 	National consultants	Bob Kazungu, REDD+ focal point, Uganda
16:00 16:30	Coffee break and networking		
16:30 – 17:30	Summary of the key strengths, gaps and issues emerging from the national consultations.	All	Bob Kazungu
Regional Knowledge Exchange - Day 2: 4 th June, 2024			
8:30 – 9:00	Recap of Day 1	Rapporteur	Girma Kabtamu CEO Natural Forest Ethiopian Forest Development
9:00 – 11:00	Terms of Reference and Groupwork: take – home messages, lessons learned and best practices from each key result areas	All	
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break and networking		
11:30-13:00	Feedback from group work And discussion	Group chair and rapporteur	
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch break and networking		
14:00 – 15:30	Summary of the discussions and way forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference and Groupwork 2 • Priority setting on key areas of capacity gaps for future interventions. 	Group chair and rapporteur	ML A. Tientcheu
15:30 – 16:00	Feedback from groupwork	Group chair and rapporteur	
16:00- 17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshop Evaluation, next steps and networking strategy to continue sharing knowledge and experiences. ○ Closing remarks 	All Guest of Honour	
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break and Networking		

Learning Lab on “Strengthening Social Inclusion in REDD+ Implementation”

Date and time: Wednesday and Friday, 5th to 6th June 2024, 08:30 – 17:30 (GMT)

Location: Hôtel le Vaisseau, Abidjan

Background

In the sustainable development goals, issues of inequality are addressed through promoting inclusive and sustainable societies because social (including gender) inequalities reduce opportunities for enhancing human well-being.

Social and gender dimensions of REDD+ aim to ensure that forest-related projects and jurisdictional programmes do not harm the environment or communities, particularly the most vulnerable groups like the poor, minority groups, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women. It is important due to the impact of interventions in the forest and land use sector on women, men, youth, boys and girls, their livelihoods, and the environment. Furthermore, the increasing need for high-integrity carbon credits, which could potentially attract higher prices, is linked to clearly defining how actions that produce results adhere to core international standards on human rights, Indigenous Peoples’ and women’s rights, community rights, gender equality, inclusive participation and governance. In addition, the demand side of carbon credits expect the benefits from REDD+ initiatives to enhance the living standards and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and advance sustainable management of the environment.

Social inclusion is ultimately about the full, meaningful effective engagement of the diverse stakeholders and rightsholders, such as Indigenous People, local communities, women and youth, to forge public policies and field actions. Social inclusion in REDD+ is essential for ensuring the effectiveness, sustainability, and legitimacy of forest conservation and climate mitigation efforts. By involving and empowering local communities and Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized groups, such as women and youth among them, REDD+ initiatives can achieve their environmental objectives while also promoting social equity, gender equality and justice. Hence a socially inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement approach is required, so that diverse governmental sectors and agencies, civil society actors, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, practitioners, the private sector and development financiers, among others, work together to devise, implement and monitor forest solutions to the climate emergency.

The main dimensions considered in social inclusion for REDD+ include, but are not limited to:

- The full and effective inclusion of historically excluded groups including, women, youth, local communities Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities.
- Benefit sharing mechanism.
- National REDD+ governance system.

The Learning Lab will feature training sessions to enhance capacity and knowledge of participants to establish social and environmental measures in countries implementing REDD+. Experts in the field of social inclusion encompassing the above dimensions will lead training sessions and provide practical insights for designing effective strategies. The interactive approach of training will also enable peer to peer learning between participants. The discussion with national stakeholders will inform how social inclusion is being addressed in their countries, paying attention on countries’ approaches to promote and implement gender-responsive processes, benefit sharing mechanism, good governance in REDD+, along with the challenges, lessons learnt and potential opportunities for improvement in the different countries in the African REDD+ process,

Event Objectives

- Improve understanding among target stakeholders of importance of social inclusion in REDD+.
- Enhance capacity of stakeholders on how to mainstream gender and women’s empowerment concepts into REDD+ policy and actions, ensuring gender-responsive benefit sharing and payment for results mechanisms to make sure those who are helping protect the forests are involved in REDD+ action and compensated for such efforts.
- Discuss experiences, best practices and lessons learned in integrating social inclusion and gender approaches into REDD+ national and jurisdictional programmes.
- Provide countries with tools for greater inclusion of their revised NDCs.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved overall knowledge on social inclusion in REDD+ by African countries;
- Enhanced capacity among participants on how to mainstream gender and women’s empowerment concepts into REDD+ policy and actions, ensuring gender-responsive benefit sharing and payment for results mechanisms to ensure those who are helping protect the forests are involved in REDD+ action and compensated for such efforts.
- Key strategies, best practices and lessons learned in ensuring social inclusion, gender equality, equitable distribution of benefits and good governance in REDD+ projects are defined and documented.
- More opportunities for technical support to countries on promoting social inclusion, gender equality and women’s empowerment in REDD+ initiatives are identified and inform NDC revision.

Agenda

Learning Lab Day 1: June 5, 2024			
Time	Activity	Speaker	Moderator
8:00 – 8:30	Arrival and Registration		
8:30 – 9:00	Introduction and Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening session • Overview of the Learning Lab objectives and expectations. 	Mami R. (UNEP)	A. Momo
9:00 –9:45	Understanding the Importance of Social Inclusion in REDD+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation (30 minutes) • Plenary - Q&A (15 minutes) 	Manja & Beth (UNDP)	A. Momo
9:45 -10:15	Coffee Break and Networking		
10:15 -11:15	Mainstreaming social inclusion and gender approaches in REDD+ planning and implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry points (45 minutes) • Plenary - Q&A (15 minutes) 	Manja & Beth (UNDP)	A. Momo
11:15 – 12:30	Group work activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 4 breakout groups, discuss how to integrate social inclusion and gender into a hypothetical REDD+ activity. Each group will have a different scenario (30 minutes) • Report back to plenary (45 minutes) 	Manja (UNDP)	A. Momo
12:30-14:00	Lunch Break and Networking Group Photo		

14:00 – 15:00	Ensuring implementation of robust benefit-sharing mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations • Discussions 	Francesca (FAO)	A. Momo
15:00-16:00	Ensuring the full and effective participation of a diverse range of stakeholders and rightsholders in REDD+: Implementation of a robust governance system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations • Discussions 	Sarah (UNEP-WCMC)	A. Momo
16:00- 17:00	Monitoring and Reporting on Social Dimension of REDD+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation • Discussion 	Sarah (UNEP-WCMC)	
Learning Lab Day 2: June 6, 2024			
8:30 – 9:00	Arrival and Registration		
9:00 – 11:00	Open-Learning Coffee (Group activities)	Participants	Achille, Sarah, Manja
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break and Networking		
11:30-13:30	Open-Learning Coffee (Group Activities)	Participants	Achille, Sarah, Manja
13:30 - 14h30	Lunch Break and Networking		
14:30 –15:30	Plenary Presentations of Group Exercise	Participants	Achille, Sarah, Manja
15:30 – 16:30	Summary of key insights (best practices, lessons learnt) from the Learning Lab	Rapporteur	Achille
16:30 – 17:30	Way forward, Evaluation, Closing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Way forward • Evaluation • Closing remarks 	Achille & Mami	Achille