



# **African Forest Forum**

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry

TERMS OF REFERENCE  
CONSULTANCY SERVICES NO 05 -1.1.6 AFF

ON

ASSESSING TRADITIONAL AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ON FOREST  
AND TREE-BASED FOOD SPECIES IN BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS IN  
AFRICA: CONSERVATION STATUS, UTILISATION AND SUSTAINABLE  
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

OCTOBER 2024

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It is an association of individuals who share the quest for and commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for the socio-economic wellbeing of its people and for the stability and improvement of its environment. The purpose of AFF is to provide a platform and create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to achieving sustainable management, use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty, promote gender equality and economic and social development.

AFF has secured funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to implement a project entitled *"Transforming the African Forest Forum to enhance its capacity to improve livelihoods and environmental stability through better management of African forest and tree resources"*. The project seeks to generate and share knowledge that enhances sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests, in the context of climate change for improved human wellbeing and environmental protection in Africa. One of the key project objectives is to "improve management of forest biodiversity to secure supply of ecosystem goods and services and safeguard human wellbeing in selected biodiversity hotspots."

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

Forests and trees play a great role in the lives of many people through provision of a myriad goods and services, including food and medicine essential for human wellbeing. Recent estimates indicate that forests and other tree-based production systems contribute to the livelihoods of more than 1.6 billion people worldwide including over two thirds of the African population. Foods from forest and tree-based systems have been found to be valuable resources for indigenous and local communities living in and adjacent to forested areas in Africa. Evidence shows that in many African countries, wild and cultivated food-based products are harvested from forest and tree-based systems by rural and indigenous populations to meet their daily dietary needs. The harvested food products include edible plants such as leafy vegetables, fruits, barks, roots, nuts and seeds as well as processed products like honey and oils, that are particularly important in providing essential vitamins and minerals. These forest foods have also been documented for their role in achieving food security and nutrition particularly in the face of climate change and associated environmental hazards such as droughts, floods and fires as well as poor harvest, illness, conflicts, or forced displacement. However, progress has been slow in documenting and profiling forest food species and associated knowledge related to their production and sustainable management. Moreover, limited progress has been made in designing and implementing contextualized measures to increase its contribution to food security, conservation of cultural heritage and poverty eradication.

There are several reasons explaining the challenges for sustainably managing, conserving and protecting forest biodiversity for provision of goods and services including foods. These reasons include, climate change and associated frequent and severe events such as droughts and floods; overexploitation and degradation of forest resources due to increasing human population and their growing demand for forest goods and service all aggravated by rampant poverty. It is widely acknowledged that indigenous peoples and local communities living in and adjacent to forests have over centuries used traditional and indigenous knowledge to predict, identify, and overcome challenges affecting access, use and management of their surrounding resources. The traditional and indigenous knowledge systems encompass a vast array of practices, innovations, and traditions developed over centuries, offering valuable insights into the sustainable use and management of biodiversity and associated products and services. Part of such biodiversity encompasses plants, animal and fungal species collected from forests and used as foods. Traditional and indigenous knowledge on their diversity, production and management practices, part used, and culinary processes varied

according to forest types, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic conditions. Such knowledge has been used over decades to identify and prioritise plant and animal species for domestication and production in human-managed production systems. Examples of such crops include *Coffea arabica*, *C. canephora* and *C. liberica* cultivated for production of coffee that were first domesticated by Ethiopian farmers and now represent an important agricultural commodity in many tropical countries.

In addition, these knowledge systems have enabled communities to identify climate resilient crop species and varieties that are adapted to harsh climatic conditions and could sustain their production in stress-boned environments. For example, through the careful selection among crops' species domesticated from forests and managed over many generations and seasons, traditional and indigenous knowledge have guided the identification of varieties with favourable characteristics such as drought tolerance, disease and pest resistance, and/or special culinary, nutritional and medicinal properties, thus contributing to sustain food security and community wellbeing in the context of climate and socio-economic changes. In addition, traditional knowledge on producing wild forest food and climate resilient farming practices could also offer huge potential for building resilience and adapting agriculture to changing environment through crops diversification. A systematic documentation of the above wealth of knowledge from different African forest types and socio-demographic contexts could significantly contribute to the identification and promotion of best conservation and management practices for enhanced access and use of forests and tree-based food species.

It is in this context that this consultancy study aims to better understand traditional and indigenous knowledge on forest and tree-based food species', their conservation status, utilisation and sustainable management practices in biodiversity hotspots, with the view to assist in designing measures and approaches for sustaining their supply and enhancing their access for forest adjacent communities and beyond. The study will involve ethnobotanical surveys of communities living in and adjacent to biodiversity hotspots across different forest types on food species exploited from forest and tree-based systems including an assessment of traditional and indigenous knowledge associated with their uses, and management practices. Documenting traditional knowledge is essential for biodiversity conservation, helps preserve cultural heritage, provides critical information for improving management of biodiversity that could secure wild species of foods for further domestication, and for future agricultural development.

### **1.3 RATIONALE**

For its plan of work for 2024, AFF plans to conduct studies to document traditional and indigenous knowledge on forest and tree-based food species in forest biodiversity hotspots with the view to inform the designing of measures and approaches for sustaining their supply and enhancing their access for the people living in and adjacent to forest biodiversity hotspots. For this, AFF is recruiting five national experts one per country to undertake country studies in five forest biodiversity hotspots in Africa. There will be one study per biodiversity hotspot to be selected from the following; Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands; Guinean Forests of West Africa; Eastern Afromontane; Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa; Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany and Horn of Africa. **Each of the five national experts will cover one biodiversity hotspot.**

### **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Undertake studies to document traditional and indigenous knowledge on forest and tree-based food species in selected biodiversity hotspots covering different forest types, their conservation status, uses, management and sustainable supply practices.

### **1.5 SPECIFIC TASKS:**

1. Document forest and tree-based food species and associated traditional and indigenous knowledge on their conservation status and uses across different forest types in the selected biodiversity hotspot.
2. Assess the supply and/or production trends of the forest and tree-based food products in the biodiversity hotspot and existing mechanisms for such supply.
3. Analyse traditional management practices for sustaining forest and tree-based food species across different forest types in the biodiversity hotspot.
4. evaluate existing measures and approaches including national policies for promoting the use and sustaining the access and supply of forest and tree-based food products in the biodiversity hotspots.
5. Identify opportunities for integrating traditional knowledge and practices into modern conservation and sustainable development strategies for the forest and tree-based food species.
6. Based on the above tasks recommend intervention measures including strategies to enhance the access and sustainable supply of forest and tree-based food products for the selected biodiversity hotspot.

### **2.0 EXPECTED DELIVERABLES**

- a) A detailed report comprising about forty (40) pages, which comprehensively addresses the assigned tasks and key result areas, excluding references, and annexes;
- b) A policy brief, and a fact sheet to be finalised in collaboration with relevant staff at the AFF Secretariat.

### **3.0 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS**

- Have at least a master's degree in forestry, ethnobotany, agriculture, environmental management, or any related area; a PhD will be an added advantage.
- Be a regional expert with broad knowledge and at least five years' post MSc experience in forestry, natural resources management or social anthropology in Africa;
- Have good writing skills and have published peer reviewed journal papers; and at least written a book chapter, and
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English or French.

### **4.0 DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT**

The tasks in this ToRs are for one and a half person-months of workload, commencing on **02 December 2024** and spread over a period of six months. The consultant shall work from their location but be in close consultation with relevant staff at the AFF Secretariat while keeping to agreed delivery schedule.

### **5.0 HOW TO APPLY**

Please email, quoting the title and number of this consultancy on the subject line and attach a proposal containing:

- Cover letter stating how you meet the above qualifications and experience requirements.
- A methodological note (of 4 pages max) indicating for each key result area, corresponding specific activities and methodology for executing them;
- A data matrix listing information needs plotted against data sources;
- A draft work plan (clear deliverables plotted against work weeks for each key result);
- A tentative table of contents for the technical report with corresponding number of pages; and
- An updated CV.

Please apply, with the subject line: **“CONSULTANCY SERVICES NO 05-1.1.6 AFF – “ASSESSING TRADITIONAL AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ON FOREST AND TREE-BASED FOOD SPECIES IN BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS IN AFRICA: CONSERVATION STATUS, UTILISATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES”** and indicating for which **biodiversity hotspot and country** you are applying for, to Dr Doris Mutta at [d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org) and Dr Djibril Dayamba at [d.dayamba@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.dayamba@cifor-icraf.org) with a copy to [exec.sec@afforum.org](mailto:exec.sec@afforum.org)

Application deadline is **17 November 2024**. Only successful applicants will be contacted.