



Call for National Experts: Research and Contextualization of Knowledge on Challenges and Opportunities for African Youth in Forestry (Kenya and Cameroon)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

"*AfricanYouth4Forests*" represents a dynamic intersection between Africa's verdant forests and its youth. It seeks to empower young Africans (aged 18–30) to transform their environmental aspirations into actionable realities. Marrying ancestral wisdom with contemporary tools, the project focuses on scientific knowledge, and empowerment, fostering a generation that is rooted in its heritage yet forward-thinking in its approach to sustainable forestry.

Forests are Africa's green canvases, covering one-third of the continent, guarding against climate change, sheltering rich biodiversity, and anchoring countless livelihoods. Yet, their whispers grow fainter with each fallen tree, each patch cleared, and each fire that rages.

Even so, a vibrant force emerges Africa's youth population, the guardians of both the past and the future. This group is four times larger than its European peers [1] and can drive innovation and sustainability on the continent. Equipped with passion, digital savviness, and respect for nature, the youth are charting a path where their understanding of the earth's value, paired with a contemporary perspective, positions them as agents of change. While vulnerable due to deforestation and climate change, their potential needs to be captured to prevent misuse of human capital and mounting frustration.

This is why the *AfricanYouth4Forests (AY4F)* project aims to cultivate a space where young people (aged 18–30) can embrace scientific knowledge about Africa's forests to understand their own role in shaping the future governance of forests, share their concerns with experts and society, and seize opportunities from an evolving bioeconomy. The project is jointly implemented by the African Forest Forum (AFF), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), through SLU-Global and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI). It contributes to the *African Agenda 2063* and the *UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030)*.

Engaging youth in sustainable forestry

Young people bring new ideas and far-reaching ambition that can help conserve African forests, sustain efforts on reforestation, and slow down the alarming rate of deforestation and land degradation. When empowered, they can build climate resilience and adaptive capacity in their communities even though they are among the most vulnerable populations which will be overly affected by climate change.

Effectively engaging continent's youth is also crucial because they are embracing the power of disruptive technology to connect across borders and implement nature-based solutions from global to community levels. Despite this latent potential, they are — and feel — under-represented. Besides the enormous challenges that they face, their needs, and aspirations are

not as frequently heard when global sustainability topics are debated. Neither are their perspectives and dependency on forests studied compared to peers in high-income countries.

1.2 RATIONALE

For its plan of work for 2024, AFF plans to conduct studies to document and contextualize scientific knowledge about Africa's forests and solutions for sustainable forest use with the view to synthesize and communicate these insights to African youth. For this, AFF is recruiting two national experts to undertake studies, one each in Kenya and Cameroon relevant to the forest types found in each country. The studies should incorporate the barriers against meaningful contribution of youth to sustainable forest use and opportunities for the youth to formulate their visions of forest conservation and management based on the following underpinning research body:

- **Forest status and climate change:** state of forests and their roles in biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and climate resilience, based on a broad state-of-the-art overview of current scientific knowledge.
- **Forests and livelihoods:** Review of literature that highlights the importance of forests for livelihoods and that provides an insight into the role of forests for women. Further, the important role of forests and forest incomes for the cultural heritage and for livelihoods for, in particular, low-income people.
- **Youth and the bio-economy:** Knowledge on how youth can promote sustainable forest use and develop opportunities in a green economy.
- **Youth voice and agency:** Knowledge that can support African youth to reflect, interact and identify a platform to influence policies for sustainable forest management and use.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Undertake studies to document and contextualize knowledge into region-specific information related to challenges and opportunities for African youth to promote their active participation in sustainable forestry.

1.4 SPECIFIC TASKS

Examine existing studies, reports, and policies related to youth in forestry in the respective African sub-regions.

- i. Provide an overview of the richness of African forests, as well as the current state, trends and threats at the regional level i.e for Eastern and Southern Africa; Western, Central and Northern Africa-respectively.
- ii. Assess the role of forests in the respective sub-regions' on young people's lives and in their communities and society.
- iii. Explore the role of gender in shaping access, management, governance and use of forest resources and their associated benefits at sub-regional level.
- iv. Delve into the challenges experienced by youth limiting their meaningful contribution to sustainable forest use at national level.
- v. Identify the most promising value chains and opportunities with significant potential for youth inclusion, youth employment and entrepreneurship at national level.
- vi. Document existing approaches/mechanisms to raise awareness and create interest in forest related issues among the youth.

- vii. Recommend intervention measures and strategies to amplify the capacities and voices among African youth to benefit from the economic, social and environmental value of all types of forests in the respective sub-regions.
- viii. Highlight national and international policymaking processes, where African youth could play a more central role.
- ix. Share youth-led success stories from the forest-based, circular bioeconomy at national level.

1.5 DELIVERABLES

Based on the knowledge body in highlighted in section 1.2 above, the selected experts are expected to submit the following deliverables:

1. **Comprehensive Research Report:** for Eastern and Southern Africa; Western, Central and Northern Africa, respectively – (up to 40 pages).
2. **Fact Sheet:** validated science-based knowledge, facts and key messages distilled from the above report in an easily understandable format (2 pages).
3. **Policy Brief:** a concise document summarizing key insights for policymakers.

1.6 DURATION

The tasks in these TORs are for a one-man month (spread over two months) workload.

1.7 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

The selected experts must have the following qualifications and skills:

- At least a master's degree in forestry, natural resource management or any related area, with experience in climate change, a PhD will be an added advantage.
- At least five years' working experience in sustainable forest management in the context of climate change;
- Proven experience in the issues youth and young professionals in forestry or in the issues of gender in natural resources management in general;
- Proven skills and experience in writing technical reports and the like, on topics related to sustainable forest management taking into account gender issues particularly youth participation;
- Excellent communication skills in English. Knowledge of French is an added advantage.

1.8 DEADLINES

- Applications must be received by the AFF Secretariat on or before **28 October 2024**.
- Consultancy activities must begin no later than **11 November 2024**.

1.9 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 (c) a brief methodology of how you intend to undertake the assignment in the respective country.**

Indicate the subject line: "RESEARCH AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN YOUTH IN FORESTRY (KENYA / CAMEROON)" to d.gitonga@CIFOR-ICRAF.org with a copy to d.mutta@CIFOR-ICRAF.org, m.avana@CIFOR-ICRAF.org and exec.sec@afforum.org. Only successful applicants will be contacted.