



# Call for Online Moderator: Community of Practice on Challenges and Opportunities for African Youth in Forestry (Eastern and Southern Africa)

## **ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION**

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is an association of individuals who share the pursuit and commitment to the sustainable management, wise use, and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for the betterment of 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 all relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to achieving sustainable management, wise use, and conservation of Africa's Forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty, protect the environment, and promote economic and social development. We invite you to learn more about AFF and World Agroforestry by accessing our web sites [www.afforum.org](http://www.afforum.org) and <http://worldagroforestry.org/>.

## **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.

### **1.1 RATIONALE**

For its plan of work for 2025, **AFF is recruiting one regional expert to moderate an online Community of Practice (CoP) on “Challenges and Opportunities for African Youth in Forestry” for the Eastern and Southern Africa regions.** The CoPs will provide an opportunity for young people-led associations, youth entrepreneurs, leaders from different educational backgrounds, and other interested youth, together with forest scientists to advance knowledge sharing about best practices for sustainable forestry.

The CoP will be hosted on a virtual web-based platform and will involve both webinar series and Chat interactions. The online moderator is expected to encourage / engage and guide interested stakeholders to attend the webinar series and the web-based discussions and share their knowledge, experiences and best practices on innovative solutions to forest-related challenges for African youth. 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.

### **1.2 PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTANCY**

The purpose of the Consultancy is for a regional forestry expert to moderate an online Community of Practice that aims to reflect on innovative solutions to forest-related challenges for African youth. The event will also provide a platform for sharing and validation of findings from a research study conducted in Eastern and Southern Africa regions on *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.*

### **1.3 SPECIFIC TASKS**

The key tasks of this assignment are as follows:

- i) In collaboration with project partners, 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 project partners 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 African youth involvement in forestry, then invite them to participate to enrich the online discussion;
- v) Identify guest speakers to develop daily presentations on the selected topics that will 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-hour webinar and Chat sessions starting from the **17 March – 1 April** 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' Community of Practice.
- IX) 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 virtual 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;
- 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.
- Experience in moderating CoPs, multi-stakeholders' participatory actions or events are desirable.



### **1.6 DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT**

The work is expected to span a calendar month, distributed over a two-month period, commencing on **3 March 2025**. 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 **15 January 2025**.
- (ii) Consultancy activities must begin no later than **3 March 2025**.

### **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 facilitator for a Community of Practice on *“Challenges and Opportunities for African Youth in Forestry (Eastern and Southern Africa).”*”** to [d.gitonga@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.gitonga@cifor-icraf.org) with a copy to [d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org](mailto:d.mutta@cifor-icraf.org), [exec.sec@afforum.org](mailto:exec.sec@afforum.org).

Only successful applicants will be contacted.