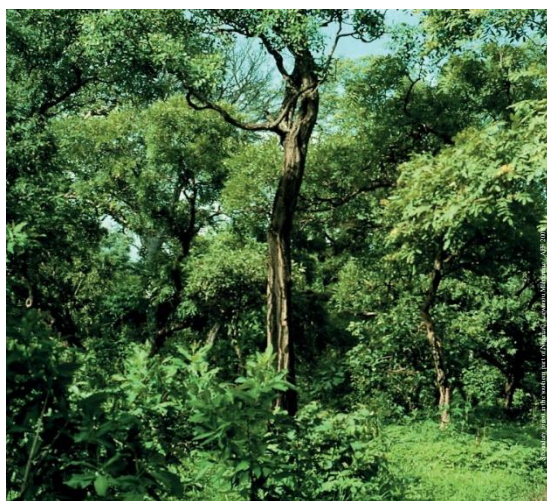




African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



Managing Forest Resources for Sustainable Development in Africa

African Forest Forum Strategy (2021-2025)



This document is based on an interactive session held by the African Forest Forum (AFF) at its staff retreat in Mombasa Kenya, on February 6, 2020. It will subsequently be subjected to review and commentary by members of the AFF Governing Council.

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Foreword

On behalf of the African Forest Forum (AFF), it gives me great pleasure to present the institution's Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2025.

Societies' ability to respond to high rates of deforestation and forest degradation in Africa depends on the resilience of human and environmental systems in the face of these changes. Enhancing the roles of forest and trees in national economic development and poverty alleviation, improving food security and nutrition, promoting environmental stability and protecting forest values on the continent are grand challenges.

AFF continues its mission to enable African countries to address these challenges successfully. Projects and activities funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are aimed at integrating across the science, policy and management disciplines that support the sustainable management and wise use of forest and tree resources for the benefit of future generations.

The AFF Strategic Plan (2021-2025) provides a robust and clear strategic focus to guide its work in line with the institution's *"Programmatic approach to the work of the African Forest Forum"*. Consequently, AFF is firmly recasting its approach from focusing only on processes and outputs to being more outcome and impact oriented. In this regard, the Plan is based on the priority areas of action identified by the African forestry fraternity and will be driven through seven programme areas that will have the benefit of addressing the many challenges and opportunities that surface in this period.

The Plan, which contributes to the implementation and monitoring of the Global Forest Goals and targets within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide, is the result of an internal consultative process which started in February 2020. With the support from its members, Governing Council, key partners and steered by the strategies stipulated in the present document, AFF will enforce its efforts in generating scientific-oriented collaborative research that could support African forestry stakeholders in the management of their forests.

Prof. Godwin Kowero
Executive Secretary – CEO of AFF

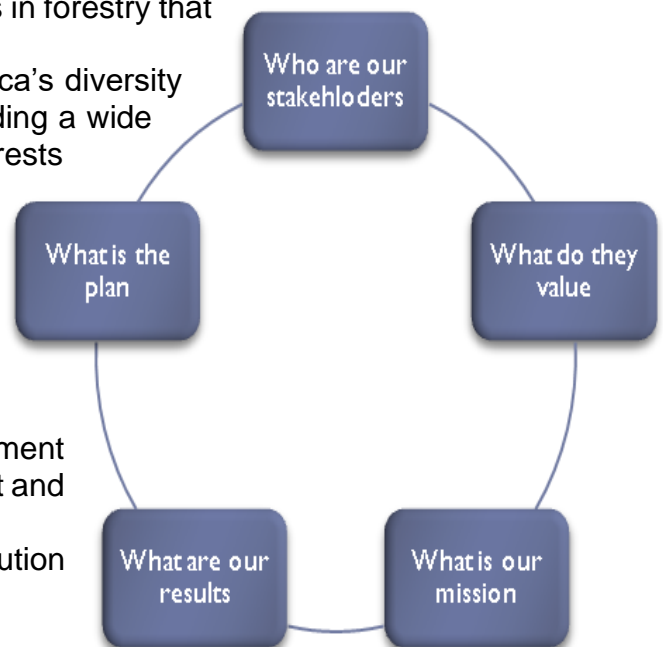
1. The Scope



A moist forested gully at Pemba Mozambique. Photo: Ton Rulkens/Wikimedia Commons

The African Forest Forum Strategy:

- Outlines the global and Africa-wide priorities in forestry that should guide the work of AFF;
- Highlights clearly the opportunities that Africa's diversity presents for AFF and African forests, including a wide range of things that influence people and forests or are impacted by them, such as climate change, issues AFF should not overlook;
- Presents guiding principles and values that should guide AFF in achieving its vision, mission and goal, and particularly in working together with its partners and other forestry related stakeholders;
- Provides strategic guidance for the development of the programmatic work of AFF in the short and medium term (5-15 years)
- Provides some highlights on how the institution will implement the strategy



1.1 Introduction

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to eradicate poverty in all forms. It has the vision set in a world free from hunger in a context of equitable and environmentally responsible sustainable development. This vision is global and universal and reflects commitment in leaving no one behind. With respect to the planet that will support the implementation of this agenda, the focus will be “to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations”. The Agenda identifies 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to guide the attainment of this vision; with almost all goals requiring inputs from the forestry sector for their realisation.

The crucial role of forests and trees outside forests in securing the lives of people, animals and plants on the planet is increasingly becoming recognized, appreciated and actions towards the realization of this role are already embodied in the SDGs. There are many benefits that can be derived from these resources, and this has been accompanied by the increase in the number and type of actors on forest and tree resources. This is firmly placing people and their environment at the centre of managing forests and trees outside forests. To reaffirm this, the international community has put up policies to guide sustainable management of forests in order not only to secure the availability of benefits in specific countries where the forests occur, but also to ensure that international goods and services originating from these resources flow to the rest of the global community. In this regard, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the apex global forestry policy institution, successfully guided the global community in formulating the following six goals, known as Global Forest Goals (GFGs), as it appears in the Economic and Social Council Resolution 2015/33 of the United Nations:

Global forest goal 1

Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change.

Goal 1 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, Sustainable Development Goal targets 6.6, 12.2, 13.1, 13.3, 14.2, 15.1–15.4 and 15.8, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 7, 9, 11, 14 and 15.

Global forest goal 2

Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including improving livelihoods of forest-dependent people.

Goal 2 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, Sustainable Development Goal targets 1.1, 1.4, 2.4, 4.4, 5.a, 6.6, 8.3, 9.3, 12.2, 12.5, 15.6 and 15.c, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 4, 14 and 18

Global forest goal 3

Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

Goal 3 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, Sustainable Development Goal targets 7.2, 12.2, 12.6, 12.7, 14.2, 14.5, 15.2 and 15.4, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 7, 11, 12 and 16

Global forest goal 4

Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships

Goal 4 and its targets support and contribute to achievement of, among other things, Sustainable Development Goal targets 12.a, 15.7, 15.a, 15.b, 17.1–17.3, 17.6, 17.7 and 17.16–17.19, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Target 19

Global forest goal 5

Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations Forest Instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Goal 5 and its targets support and contribute to achievement of, among other things, Sustainable Development Goal targets 1.4, 2.4, 5.a, 15.9, 15.c, 16.3, 16.5–16.7, 16.10 and 17.14, as well as Aichi Biodiversity targets 2 and 3

Global forest goal 6

Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders

Goal 6 and its targets support and contribute to achievement of, among other things, Sustainable Development Goal target 17.14.

In addition to this policy guidance from UNFF, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) also came up with the Paris Agreement that provides guidance on how the global community could address climate change and variability. The contribution of forests to climate change has been recognized in the Paris Agreement. Developing appropriate adaptation and mitigation actions include the improvement of forest management to reduce vulnerability and to mitigate Green House Gases (GHGs) through REDD+ and CDM mechanisms. In addition, African governments have demonstrated considerable commitment to addressing climate change issues through their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which are still nascent and require strengthening and monitoring.

Further, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has mobilized the global community towards achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). This is a unique approach that counterbalances the expected loss of productive land with the recovery of degraded areas. It strategically places the measures to conserve, sustainably manage and restore land in the context of land use planning. Africa is mainly arid and semi-arid, with considerable areas under dry forests.

In Africa, the continent has been mobilized to contribute to these global initiatives through its Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa (SFMF). The specific objectives of the SFMF are to:

1. Provide strategic guidance to member states and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on sustainable forest management.
2. Facilitate Africa-wide monitoring and reporting on sustainable forest management.
3. Facilitate harmonization of policies and legal frameworks across Africa.
4. Serve as a basis for co-ordinating knowledge management, exchange of best practices and information.
5. Facilitate establishment of partnerships and investments in sustainable forest management.

The first phase of SFMF timeframe is 2020-2030. AFF is one of the institutions that comprise the Expert Working Group set up by the African Union Commission to ensure effective and coordinated implementation of the African Union Sustainable Forest Management Framework.

The AFF Strategy has been developed to provide guidance on how the institution should develop and implement its programmes, activities, and institutional culture in ways that contribute to forestry and related aspirations of the African continent, as well as those of the global community.

1.2. African forests and forestry: opportunities and challenges

Forests and woodlands, according to the latest estimate of FAO, cover an estimated 624 million hectares in Africa, which is about 15.6% of the world's forest cover. The forests occupy about 20.6% of the continent's land area. The continent also has extensive areas classified as 'other wooded land', such as widespread savannas of Eastern Africa along with the extensive Sudano-Sahelian region and the fertile highlands of eastern and Southern Africa, where much of Africa's agriculture, animal and human population density is found.

Major forest types include dry tropical forests and woodlands (most extensive), moist tropical forests in western and central Africa, mangroves in the coastal zones, montane forests around highlands and mountains of central and Eastern Africa. Man-made plantations cover limited parts (estimated at 8 million ha) of Africa's total forest area, with South Africa, Sudan, Nigeria and Morocco contributing considerably to this type of forest cover. Large-scale commercial forest operations are found in the plantation-based forest industry in the South and in the concession-based timber extraction and sawmilling

industry in Central and West Africa. Small quantities of plantation and naturally grown timber constitute the basis for small scale forest industry across the continent.

Africa's forests are highly diverse. They are renowned for their habitats for wildlife, beekeeping, unique natural ecosystems and genetic resources. They are a catchment to many rivers that are a cornerstone of economic development in the region. Africa's forests are also increasingly receiving global attention because of their share in biological diversity, potential for industrial timber exports, livelihood 'safety nets', capacity for meeting the continent's energy needs and mitigating the adverse effects of global climate. Forests are crucial at a continental scale for maintaining environmental quality. They also play a vital role of providing important ecosystem services, such as the protection of water and soil resources, biodiversity conservation and climate-change adaptation and mitigation. According to World Bank (2016), rural households living near forests obtain about 22 percent of their income from timber and non-timber sources. An estimated 11 percent of rural populations in Africa are lifted above the extreme poverty line with income from forest resources.

Deforestation and forest degradation are key global forestry challenges. In Africa, they result from agricultural expansion-which is the main driver, in addition to increased exploitation due to rapid economic and population growth. Concerns about the destruction of Africa's forests and lands, particularly on strategies and actions for their rehabilitation, has grown considerably in the recent past. There is good evidence that there has been many changes in forest management and thinking in Africa and globally, and this has facilitated at least the following developments in Africa:

- a) Decentralization and devolution of forest administration and increased emphasis on community participation in forest management.
- b) Changes in forest administration especially through the establishment of more autonomous boards, authorities and commissions.
- c) Increased role for the private sector in forestry production and processing; this has led to privatisation of public-owned commercial enterprises, including forest industries and plantations in many countries.
- d) Increased role of civil society – especially national and international non-governmental organisations specifically in influencing forest resource management, particularly through their advocacy role, and also through direct involvement in forestry initiatives in supporting community participation.
- e) Increased political good will across the globe, including Africa, due to concerns about global changes, especially those stemming from demands that forests, shall provide global public goods and services, and environmental protection in particular, as reflected in various international arrangements including treaties and conventions.

The opportunities that forests and trees offer to the continent and the challenges that confront the forestry sector combine to define the agenda for the African Forest Forum (AFF).

2. AFF: the institution



Photo: Faidherbia albida parklands in Mali - Credit - Ake Mamo World Agroforestry Centre

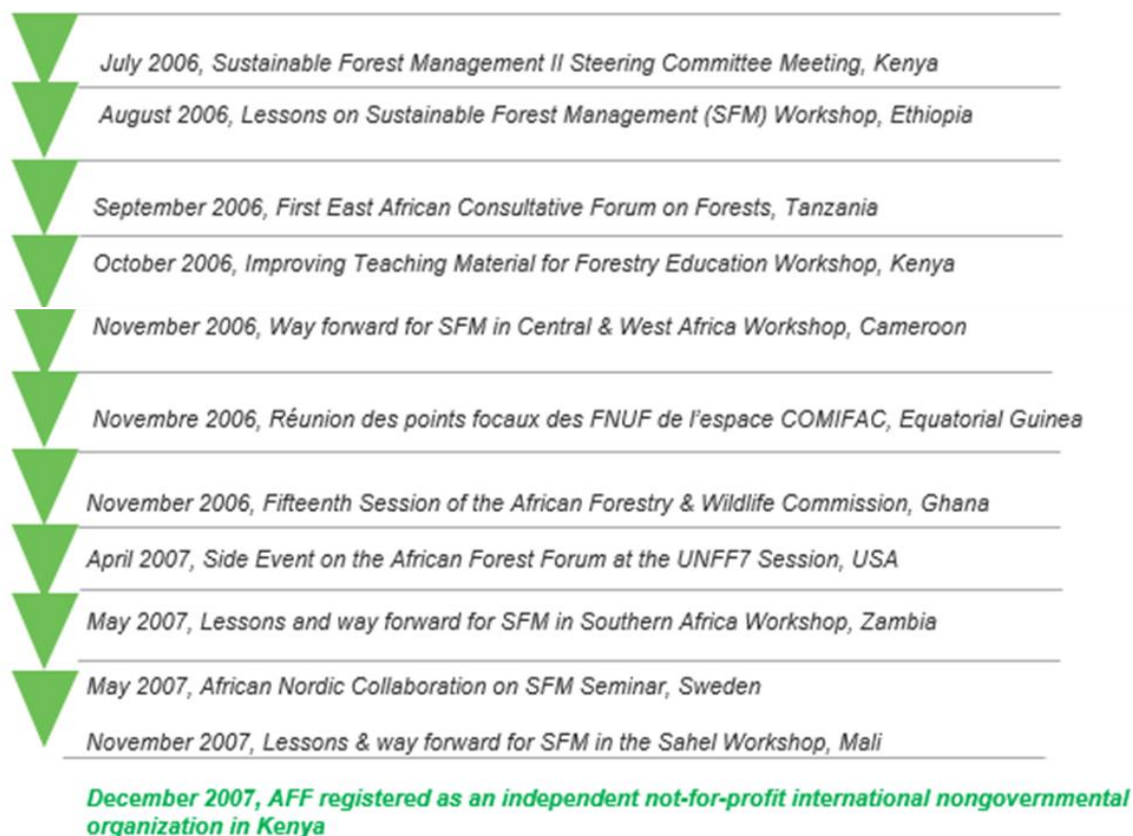
2.1 Evolution of the African Forest Forum

In 2003, the African Forest Research Network (AFORNET) at the African Academy of Sciences, together with the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) implemented a two-year project on “Lessons Learnt on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa” funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). The discussion of results from studies implemented under this project recommended, among other things, the establishment of a platform that could support African forestry stakeholders in the management of their forests. This led to the establishment of the African Forest Forum by the founding members, who were actually the steering committee members of the project, on January 26, 2007.

Shortly thereafter, on December 06, 2007, the Kenyan Non-governmental Organizations Registration Board approved registration of AFF as a not-for-profit international NGO based in Nairobi, Kenya.

The African Forest Forum was formed after extensive analysis, a series of participatory processes and consultations with many stakeholders, who helped to define the core needs and issues at the heart of African forestry and provided legitimacy for the existence of the institution and the priority issues it will address.

Some of the meetings held during the formation of the African Forest Forum included the following:



2.2 AFF governance

The Members' Forum, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee, and the Secretariat are the key organs of the Forum. There are also committees of the Governing Council: the Executive Committee, the Technical Support Team (TST) to Raise the Profile of Forestry, the Working Group on Climate Change, the Task Force on Resources Mobilisation, and the Finance Committee. AFF has an independent Project Steering and Advisory Committee that provides strategic guidance, scientific quality assurance, as well as financial oversight over AFF's projects. It also ensures that project implementation stays on course and that all practices reflect AFF's values of quality participation and inclusivity and pass the threshold of international standards and are consistent with donor and AFF values and principles. The Governing Council (GC) and all the committees have been established with specific purposes and have terms of reference to guide their work.

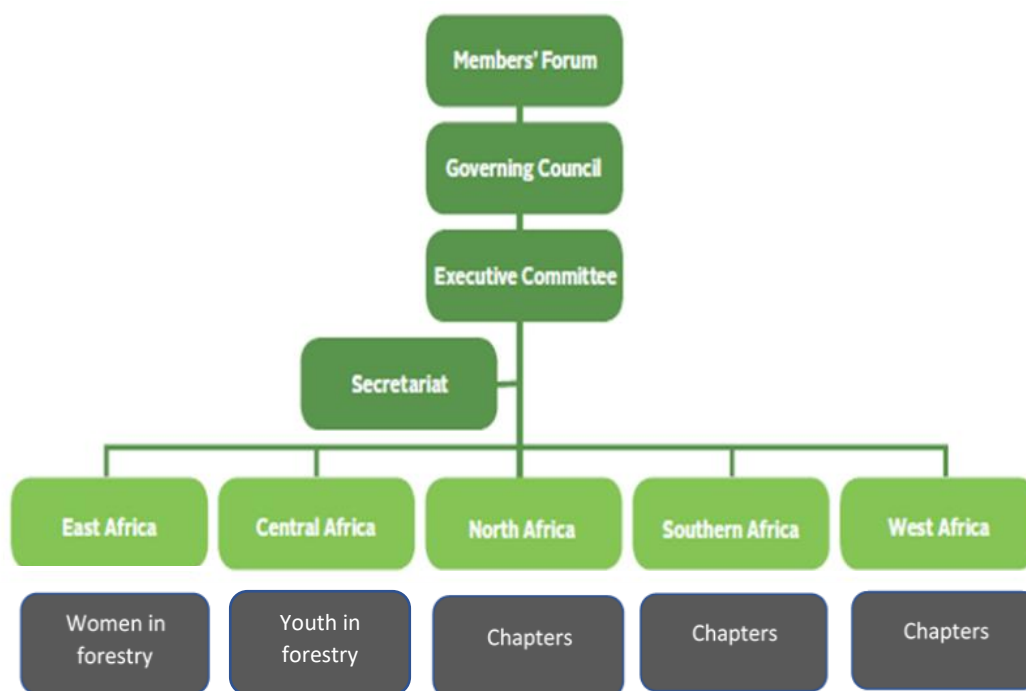


Figure 1: AFF Governance Model

2.3 Definition, Vision, Mission and Goal of AFF

Definition

Established in 2007 as a non-political, non-governmental, objective, independent and not for profit international organization, the African Forest Forum (AFF) is an association of individuals with a commitment to the sustainable management, wise use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources for the socio-economic well-being of its people and for the stability and improvement of its environment.

AFF exists to voice the concerns of African forestry stakeholders, and to use science, indigenous knowledge, and experience to advocate for the importance of forests and trees outside forests to peoples' livelihoods, national economies and the stability of the environment.

AFF provides a platform for independent analyses and advice to national, regional and international institutions and actors, on how economic, food security and environmental issues can be addressed through the sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests.

Vision

The leading forum that unites all stakeholders in African forestry

Mission

To contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the people of Africa and the environment they live in through the sustainable management and use of tree and forest resources on the African continent

Goal

To galvanize a common African voice and opinion, and mobilise resources that are required to address forestry and related issues that cut across countries and regions, with the aim of enhancing the relevance and contribution of forests and trees to the people of Africa and their environment.

2.4 Strategic operating values and principles

Since its establishment in 2007, AFF has provided a bridge between science-based knowledge and strong policies to support sustainable forest management, effectively working within a science-policy-management framework. The focus of AFF is the African people and the environment they live in. Forest and tree resources outside forests are therefore sustainably managed and used in ways that contribute to the welfare of the people and also to the stability of the environment.

However, forests are increasingly being viewed in the broader context of the ecosystem services they provide. With the continued increasing demands on the forest and tree resources that also come with many players in the sector, the necessity for a much clearer mapping of issues, opportunities and challenges that bear on the sector becomes a prerequisite for the institution. This will make the institution to have a clearer vision of the future and therefore define a path to follow, using the resources it can muster, in order to create the desirable changes in the society and to the state of these resources.

AFF made the conscious decision in its strategy (2015-2020) to foster a new level of cooperation and transparency through enhanced partnerships at national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.

The strategy was developed to make AFF a stronger and more focused institution, with the ability to deliver more effectively on its mandate, while taking into account the challenges and opportunities that continue to unfold in the forestry sector. Guided by strategic and operating values contained in the strategy, AFF's work has been based on four priority areas namely, networking, programming, advocacy and organizational development. This strategy will continue to strengthen these four priority areas.

In this regard AFF is guided, in its activities, by its programmatic approach that shows how the institution logically addresses its mission and goal, in the context of the many challenges and opportunities related to the forest and tree resources of Africa.

Equally, AFF has guidelines and procedures that guide procurement services and management of financial and human resources; these together with the programmatic approach facilitate the execution of its activities. Operationally, the AFF will be engaged in the development and implementation of programmes, projects and activities that are

based on its programmatic approach, and in close co-operation/collaboration with its wide range of stakeholders. The key AFF partners share a common understanding and are bound together by a core set of values that are fundamental guiding principles that determine their continued association and actions.

The core values of AFF, not listed in order of priority, are:

- Transparency in all that the institution does.
- Accountability to the AFF constituency.
- Integrity that ensures that the institution can be trusted in all aspects of its work.
- Honesty in handling resources, implementing AFF's activities and reporting.
- Professionalism and excellence in all that the institution does.
- Respect for diversity, gender and others, including those who depend on forest and tree resources and AFF stakeholders.
- Taking into consideration ethics in all aspects of the work of the institution.

In all AFF does, it is guided by the following principles:

- Benefiting humanity and the environment.
- Securing equitable access to and use of forest and tree resources.
- Incorporating gender aspects in its work.
- Applying the best available knowledge, including indigenous knowledge, in the management of forest and tree resources.
- Combating illegalities in the forest sector.
- Cultivating intersectoral integration and synergy.
- Working in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
- Prioritizing rights and privileges of people residing in and around forests and other marginalised communities.

2.5. Managing knowledge at AFF

Given the crucial role of managing and sharing knowledge generated by AFF and its partners, AFF has established a Communications and Knowledge Management Unit that manages all knowledge produced by the institution and its partners and communicates it widely through various avenues.

Knowledge management

AFF views knowledge management as a dual challenging activity. First, managing information and processes and, second, managing people and their environment so that knowledge is created, shared and applied more systematically and effectively. By developing a new balance in the creation, sharing, translation and application of knowledge, AFF will continue to work towards delivering on its commitment as a knowledge brokerage institution that facilitates access to forest related information for a sustainable future, and guided by its Knowledge Management Strategy (KMS).

In view of this, knowledge management will be mainstreamed into institutional processes for stronger horizontal and vertical knowledge sharing. Consequently, knowledge management will not only become a way of working, but also the backbone of the

organization where tools and/or systems will be used to capture, store, and effectively share knowledge. The result will be a more integrated and systematized knowledge management system which will benefit external audiences and boost AFF's positioning, relevance, and visibility (see Figure 2).

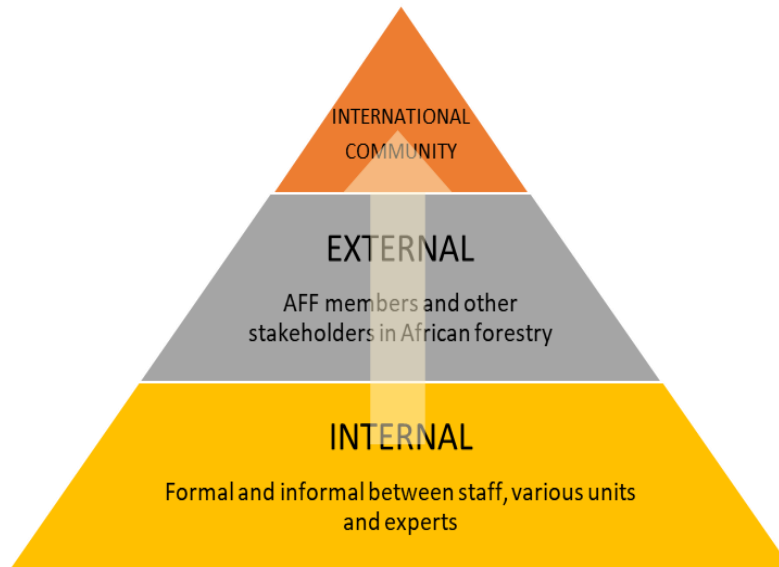


Figure 2: Knowledge sharing at AFF

Communication

Communication or sharing knowledge, is at the heart of AFF's effectiveness in providing knowledge and critical information demanded by stakeholders in African forestry.

Implementation of the AFF's Communication Strategy will guide the ability to inform the public about new technical findings, promote their uptake in policy and practice, as well as develop new strategic partnerships to foster the sustainable management and use of forest and tree resources. In this respect, several channels and related strategies for sharing information in a coherent and timely manner among the ever increasing AFF members and stakeholders in forestry will be a key focus.



Figure 3: Sample of some knowledge products produced by the AFF

These channels include regular media engagement; dissemination of scientific publications and newsletters; development of tailor-made web content; advocacy and outreach; social networking; events and partnerships.

Delivery of messages and information products in easily understandable formats and language will further support capacity building in many areas central to the practice of forestry, as well as on seemingly new and emerging areas that continue to feature high in AFF's work. As a result, it is anticipated that attention to forest and tree resources will be substantially improved, with AFF's profile, reputation and membership gaining visibility at the local, regional and international news channels, sites and social media platforms.

AFF website

The AFF website serves as a knowledge and information hub on African forestry for its members and other stakeholders. It increases the public's access to data and information on forestry and other developments around the world, largely through collaboration with AFF members and relevant organizations and individuals. The website has also been expanded considerably in terms of functionality to include two new knowledge portals. The portals link to 118 databases on forest resources and related information, to provide a one-stop shop for forestry knowledge in Africa. AFF will continuously improve its website and intranet through the following strategic areas:

a. *Boost Engagement*

- i) Develop a highly interactive platform that enhances engagement of AFF members through forums, online conferences and communities of practice. Grouping members according to respective interests e.g. by skillset or geography to encourage knowledge exchange.

- ii) Upgrade participatory features e.g. events registration, call for proposals, member to member communication, news and noticeboard section for members etc.
- iii) Build a robust digital repository that stores and maintain digital assets from AFF and members for access and reuse.
- b. *Increase efficiency*
 - i) Create a more user-friendly registration, login and profile management platform based on current standards through minimizing number of click-throughs to achieve profile management tasks.
 - ii) Employ modern development tools that ensure the site is cross platform and device compatible.
 - iii) Improve on code security by ensuring upgraded coding is applied in establishing the system.
- c. *Enhance visibility*
 - i) Use of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tools and strategies to ensure the website is widely accessible to target audiences especially in Africa.
 - ii) Identify content gaps and developing AFF-based keywords to enhance search engine rankings.
 - iii) Develop a content “marketing” strategy that identifies content and best way to utilize distribution platforms.
- d. *Secure the platform against threats and attacks*
 - i) Integrate Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to platform URL.
 - ii) Introduce email verification and captcha during registration.
 - iii) Develop robust validation process to detect malicious access.
 - iv) Incorporate traffic firewall (Cloudflare) to secure traffic accessing the intranet.

2.6 AFF as a platform for facilitating change in the forestry sector

a) AFF as a partnership platform

Partnership is AFF's ‘way of working’, and is embedded in all its interventions, primarily through: convening meetings on specific issues as well as in on-going sharing, learning and co- creation of solutions among the AFF membership – at continental, regional and national levels; the creation of strategic teams tasked to generate scalable solutions to specific challenges; and brokering collaboration through ‘match-making’ to create partnerships that bring together complementary resources and/or skills that could enhance effectiveness and probability of success in delivery of interventions at regional or continental levels.

b) AFF's role in influencing policy

This has been achieved primarily in the following areas:

- Providing a platform for policy advocacy.
- Raising the profile of forests and trees in economic development.
- Generating evidence for policy making.
- Facilitating and influencing political action on forest resources management.

- Assistance in analysing links between international and national forest policies.

c) AFF as a knowledge broker

In this regard, AFF is involved in:

- Collating and synthesizing information.
- Translating information and knowledge to generate evidence.
- Connecting people to relevant information and evidence for decision making – in various forms and through its various platforms.
- Helping to facilitate the generation of information and knowledge to fill critical gaps.

d) AFF as a resource mobilizer

AFF identifies and mobilizes physical, human and financial resources to support strategic interventions which have potential for scaling for greater impact.

e) AFF as a facilitator of Africa's participation in international forums

AFF facilitates participation of African countries in international forums, including provision of crucial technical information, mentoring, and better coordination of participation, helping Africa to speak with one informed voice on common positions.

2.7 Key partners and collaborators

AFF works with many partners to address the needs of African forestry stakeholders. Some of the institutions, organisations, and networks with whom AFF has formal or informal arrangements are listed below:

- African Union Commission (AUC)
- African Academy of Sciences (AAS)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC)
- African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE)
- Bern University of Applied Sciences
- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- Commission des Forêts de l'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC)
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- East African Community (EAC)
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Forest Research Network for Sub-Sahara Africa (FORNESSA)
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
- International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO)
- Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF)
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
- Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)
- Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
- United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
- World Conservation Union (IUCN) -Eastern Africa Regional Office,

...and many other African forestry research, education and development institutions and networks.

3. The strategic direction for the work of AFF



Photo: Forest cover at the foot of Mt Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. © Wikimedia Commons ICC BY-SA 3.0

3.1 The Short- and Medium-Term Strategic Direction for the work of AFF (5-15 years)

Apart from taking up opportunistic issues that surface in this period and are within the mandate of AFF, the institution will adhere to its “Programmatic approach to the work of the African Forest Forum”. The AFF’s programme structure (Figure 4) demonstrates how the institution logically addresses the many challenges and opportunities related to the forest and tree resources of Africa, and as linked to African and global perspectives that have bearing on forests and trees outside forests. At the centre of all is the commitment to promote sustainable management of these resources in ways that address the needs of people and the environment they live in. Therefore, Programme Area No.1 is devoted to all aspects directly related to the management, conservation, improvement and expansion of the continent’s forest and tree resources. Technical aspects of specific purposes of forest management are dealt with in Programme 2 (economic development), Programme 3 (environmental health, including climate aspects), and Programme 4 (food security). Policies and Governance are dealt with in Programme 5, while improved capacities and skills (training, education and research) are the focus of Programme 6 and, finally, Programme 7 focuses on information management and sharing as well as impact assessment of AFF’s interventions. Naturally, there will be aspects that cut across these areas like issues of gender, youth and marginalized groups, contributions to the SDGs and other global initiatives; as well as projects and activities which will have components related to more than one programme.



Figure 4: The AFF's programme structure

In all this work, AFF seeks to achieve the following goals:

Programme 1 Goal:

AFF, with appropriate partners, will work on increasing the knowledge and understanding on how to manage Africa's forest and tree resources, including their dynamics, containing deforestation, increasing their quality and extent, best silvicultural practices, protection of the resources, improved seed sources and other aspects related to managing, expanding, improving and protecting the resources.

The overall goal is to facilitate enhancement of SFM in all forest types in Africa.

Programme 2 Goal:

AFF, with appropriate partners, will work on all relevant aspects of economic production of wood- and non-wood-based forest and tree products, cost-benefit analyses of such products, product development, value-adding and small-and medium scale forest industries, economic opportunities for communities and rural people, understanding value chains and consumer demands and preferences, and local, national, regional and international trade issues and opportunities related to forest/tree products.

The overall goal is to identify and promote opportunities for economic development and poverty eradication based on forest and tree products.

Programme 3 Goal:

AFF, with appropriate partners, will work on all relevant aspects of how forest and tree resources interact with and can contribute to positive developments in climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and enhancement, ensuring water resources availability and quality, and other aspects of forest-environment interactions.

The overall goal is to increase the knowledge and understanding of how forests and trees can contribute to a better environment in Africa, particularly with regard to adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, and to biodiversity and water conservation.

Programme 4 Goal:

AFF, with appropriate partners, will work mainly on aspects where forests and trees directly or indirectly can improve food security. The specific aspects of economic potentials through supplementary incomes from wood and non-wood forest products will mainly be dealt with in Programme 2, and aspects of positive forest macro-influences on food production through improved hydrology and climate will mainly be handled in Programme 3. Aspects related to tenure and user rights of forest food will be dealt with in Programme 5.

The overall goal is to identify, analyse and promote ways in which forests and trees can increase, diversify and improve food and nutrition security.

Programme 5 Goal:

AFF, with appropriate partners, will work on relevant aspects of identifying, formulating and promoting policies, legislation and governance measures aimed at improved sustainable and increased forest and tree management and conservation. Likewise, AFF will continue to support African nations and sub-regional and regional bodies in participating in international forest-related policy processes, as well as in the implementation of decisions and recommendations coming out of such processes (through its Technical Support Team).

The overall goal is to facilitate creation of a favorable environment for conceiving and implementing policies and enforcement of laws and regulations as a means towards SFM as a contributor to social and economic development and to environmental improvement.

Programme 6 Goal:

AFF, with appropriate partners, will work on identifying gaps in capacities, skills and knowledge at all relevant levels (government agencies, technical and academic training institutions, community associations, private business, etc.), and in developing and promoting tools and means aimed at increasing relevant capacities and skills, e.g. through training courses, teaching and education material, hand-books, technical publications, fact-sheets, etc.

The overall goal is to raise awareness and provide knowledge and skills to forestry practitioners, and those responsible for driving forestry development in various institutions.

Programme 7 Goal:

AFF will work on the collation, synthesis and provision of access to critical information and knowledge required by, and adapted to the unique needs of, various stakeholders in African forestry, as well as providing information to support decision- and policy-making for enhancing SFM at national, regional and continental levels. In addition, AFF will develop efficient tools to monitor and assess impact of its own and others' programmes.

The overall goals are to: (a) to build up and apply an effective system for generating, accessing and making available relevant knowledge and information, and, (b) to assess what impact AFF's interventions have.

3.2 Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting on AFF's activities

It is very important for AFF to align its various plans in ways that lead to more efficient use of resources in their implementation by capitalizing on synergies among them, as well as to increase the scope of the work of the institution, efficiency in the use of resources and increase its impact. It is also important to monitor progress on implementation of plans in order to accommodate changing circumstances.

A key aspect of the work of AFF is its impact. In this regard, it is important to monitor uptake of information shared by AFF, its impact, and report on the same. Therefore, the AFF has created a "Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting"-PMER-Unit. A staff member has been recruited to guide the work of this Unit and in line with the AFF PMER Strategy. Consequently, the planning and monitoring of results-based performance of annual activities of projects have continued to receive considerable input from this Unit. Evaluation of performance of AFF's dissemination approach through workshops, training courses and seminars will continue to be a constant activity of this Unit.

Every six months after these events, and one year after, there will be a follow up on what those participating in such events promised to do. In this way, AFF will keep track of progress made and possible impact of information shared through these avenues. Besides, the monitoring of uptake and impact of information generated and shared through the previous phases of each project will continue to be implemented. This is because the current projects build upon some activities that were previously not fully implemented and issues that were relevant in their previous phases and still continue to be relevant.

3.3 Finance and administrative management at AFF

AFF is guided in both financial and administrative matters through its Finance and Administrative Unit. This is guided by the following key documents that have been approved by the Governing Council and also used by external financial auditors.

- a) Guidelines for Administrative and Financial Operations
- b) African Forest Forum Financial Regulations and Rules

ICRAF is currently AFF's host institution and AFF has an agreement with ICRAF that regulates the hosting arrangement. Within this agreement ICRAF supplies AFF with office space, security at office, key security information, ICT services, procurement services,

human resources services especially for staff recruitment, the handling of all staff salaries and insurance (including taxes for local staff), security services and protocol related facilitation; all these at a fee. Currently AFF processes its payments through ICRAF's financial system. AFF also adheres to all related ICRAF policies and guidelines in these areas.

AFF seeks to strategically manage its resources with the intention of attaining its set goals and objectives while maximizing the impact of her activities in the most effective and efficient way and increase value for money. To achieve this, AFF endeavors to map her stakeholders and to continually identify and monitor the role(s) of each of them in the efficient and effective utilization of AFFs' resources. AFF also seeks to achieve strategic financial management through: strategic planning and implementation, management of stakeholder processes and relationships, integrating programmatic work and financial management and financial risk analysis and mitigation.

3.4. The sustainability of AFF

The Governing Council (GC) has established a "Task Force for Resource Mobilisation" to assist with and advice on raising necessary funds and other resources required to implement the AFF programmes.

In the last five years (2015-2019) the support from SDC and Sida has permitted an annual expenditure level of between USD 2 and 3.0 million. This has enabled AFF to carry out a very varied and active programme, with broad focuses on "Strengthening Sustainable Forest Management in Africa" (with financial support from Sida), which basically targets Programme Area 1 and "African Forests, People and Climate Change" (with financial support from SDC), targeting Programme Area 3. In addition to the actual technical aspects of the programmes, substantial funds have also been made available for Programme Areas 5 (policies and governance), 6 (capacity building) and 7 (sharing information knowledge products).

In addition to the above two major sources of funds, AFF provides inputs into the work of several regional and international organisations (e.g. ECOWAS, GGWSSI, AUC and the FAO Regional Office for Africa), some of which contributes towards meeting AFF's expenses in such work. From 2018 there has also been a collaborative research programme between AFF and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) supported financially by the Swedish research foundation, FORMAS.

As a result of the contributions by the two major donors, the AFF Secretariat has a strong staff situation with eight professional and technical staff - the Executive Secretary, three Senior Programme Officers, two Programme Officers and three specialists responsible for PMER, Knowledge Management, and Communications. There is also one Senior Administrative Officer and one Senior Finance Officer. A very substantial part of AFF's work is carried out by external experts – ranging from 30-40 per year - largely drawn from amongst its members on the continent and by partner organisations.

Apart from running the basic operations of the Secretariat and the Governing Council and its various committees and task forces, the support since AFF started operations in 2007 also permitted the implementation of several projects, studies, seminars and workshops, publications, etc. This has allowed AFF to establish a very high-profile working relationship, both in Africa and internationally. AFF staff, Governing Council and some of its committee members and experts commissioned by AFF have been able to attend, and provide important inputs into many meetings, conferences, workshops, in Africa, and including the conference of parties for UNFCCC, UNCCD, UNEP-General Assembly, as well as meetings of FAO-COFO and sessions of UNFF; all of which have a bearing on forest and tree resources of Africa. In summary, AFF today is a highly accomplished, well respected and much appreciated actor on the African forest scene.

In the short time perspective, i.e. 2021-2022, AFF will be able to continue with a high level of activities based on current funding commitments from Sweden and Switzerland.

However, there is now an urgent need to considerably expand the funding base, particularly by attracting a few substantial donors to AFF's core programme beyond 2022. In addition, it is likely that, in view of AFF's rapidly increasing attractiveness as an analytical and technical partner in many kinds of initiatives, there will be expanding opportunities to attract funding for special projects, studies, consultancies, training courses, joint undertakings, etc. It will be important for AFF to handle such opportunities, both those where AFF is approached by others and those where the initiative comes from AFF, in a rational way. The main determining factor for whether AFF gets involved should be found within its own programme and issues priorities, not in the possibility of getting funding per se.

From the point of view of ensuring sufficient resources available also after 2022, it will be essential for AFF to effectively use the time until mid-2022 to achieve the following goals:

- AFF must deliver high quality, relevant and timely results and outputs from the six "components" in the Sida supported programme and the five "outcomes" in the SDC supported programme. This will be an essential and necessary foundation for not only acquiring continued funds from these donors but will also be a showcase for attracting other contributions after 2022.
- Start negotiating a new phase of support from SDC (and eyeing at the possible extension of the current agreement with Sida until 2024 or come up with a new agreement),
- Identify and prepare supporting agreements around priority programmes of a similar magnitude to the currently on-going ones with two-three new potential major donors, at least one of which ought to be from the continent (e.g. the African Development Bank).
- Identify and hold preliminary talks on support with an additional 3-4 other international donors.
- Make determined efforts to build up own funds – as a reserve or endowment fund - through self-generated income, donations, membership contributions, etc.

List of Annexes

ANNEXURE 1: SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE AFRICAN FORESTRY SECTOR

Strengths of the sector

- Large areas with renewable forest resources;
- Existence of institutional infrastructure in most African countries for forest management;
- Existence of a corps of professionals in forestry in Africa;
- Forestry interfaces with many other sectors of the national economies;
- Strongly related to livelihoods and environment-poverty and food security;
- Multi-functionality of forests increases their roles and potentials for socio-economic development;
- Development of tree resources outside the forest compliments the goods and services from forests.

Weaknesses of the sector

- Weak governance institutions;
- Lack of/limited political awareness and support to the forestry sector;
- Insufficient and patchy distribution of human capacity in the sector;
- Lack of information on the value and contribution of forest resources in household and national economies;
- Lack of/Insufficient regulation of cross- border trade among African countries;
- Weak enforcement of forest policy, laws and regulations;
- Sector is poorly developed and organized;
- Sector is underinvested, therefore requires much more investment than available at present;
- Fragility of the forest ecosystem complicates management of the resource;
- Unclear land, forest and tree tenure constrains good management and investment in the sector.

Opportunities for the sector

- High potential to improve the generation of economic benefits of forest and trees;
- Increased global awareness/recognition of the role of forests and trees to people and their environmental (climate, water, biodiversity issues);
- Low commercialization in the forest sector
- Increasing demand and declining supply of forest products and services across Africa.
- Under-financing for forestry conservation and management.
- Multi-functionality of forests increase their roles and potentials for socio-economic development;
- Development of tree resources outside the forest compliments the goods and services from forests.
- Threats to the sector

- Illegal harvesting and trade of forest resources;
- Over exploitation of the forest resources, resulting in unwanted deforestation and degradation;
- High population pressure raising demand for forest goods and services as well as for forest land leading to conversion of forest lands into agricultural lands, and degradation of the resources;
- Inappropriate pricing of forest products and services (denying sellers and governments revenues), some do not even have a market price;
- Unplanned use of forest resources;
- Failure to develop agricultural productivity as a way of reducing pressure on forest land.
- Global warming and climate change

ANNEXURE 2: SWOT ANALYSIS OF AFF

Strengths of AFF

- Membership is voluntary and members are willing and committed to forestry development (i.e. volunteers, willingness and commitment);
- Independent and non-political.
- The membership contains considerable expertise, both in width and depth;
- Diversity of memberships (professional, geographical and linguistic).
- Growing recognition of AFF and its work;
- Accountability of AFF to its membership and other stakeholders like development partners is very good;
- Regional reach
- Achievements of AFF are widely known and appreciated;
- Strong and growing partnerships with relevant international and regional institutions.

Weaknesses of AFF

- Understaffed Secretariat;
- Young organization;
- Dependence on others for funds and facilities;
- Weak representation from private sector.

Opportunities of AFF

- Growing recognition and increased resources for its planned activities will increase impacts;
- Replicate the success of TST at UNFF in other organizations;
- General goodwill in and outside the AFF.

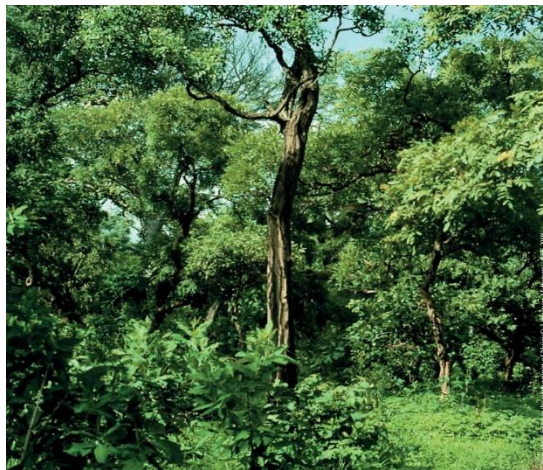
Threats

- Existing and potential competitors dealing with the same issues, collaborators/stakeholders and donors;
- Potential vulnerability to division based on language barriers in Africa, viz. across
- Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone divisions;
- Sustainability of funding



African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African forestry



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