

Evaluation of SDC and Sida support to African Forest Forum

Final Report

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
AFF	African Forest Forum
AFOLU	Agriculture, forestry and other land use
AUC	African Union Commission
CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBFF	Congo Basin Forest Fund
CDM	Clean development mechanism
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
COFO	FAO Committee on Forestry
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
CoP	Community of practice (AFF)
COP	Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC)
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests (UN)
CWA	Central and West Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENB	Earth Negotiations Bulletin
ESA	East and Southern Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FLEGT	Forest law enforcement governance and trade
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFFP	Global Forest Finance Pledge
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests (UN)
ICRAF	International Council for Research in Agroforestry
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (UNFCCC)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
IPF	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
IURFO	International Union of Forestry Research Organisations
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LULUCF	Land use, land use change and forestry
M&A	Mitigation and adaptation
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (UNFCCC)
NAP	National Adaption Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action (UNFCCC)
NDC	Nationally determined contribution (UNFCCC)
NGARA	Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NLBI	Non-Legally Binding Instrument
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
NWFP	Non-wood forest product
PA	Paris Agreement
PPP	Public private partnership
REDD+	Reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDC GPCCE	SDC Global Programme for Climate Change and Environment
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToC	Table of contents
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environmental Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	UN Forum on Forests
UNFFS	UNFF Secretariat
UNFI	UN Forest Instrument
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UN-REDD	UN Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
UNSPF	UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030
USD	US Dollar
USP	Unique Selling Proposition
VCS	Voluntary carbon Standard
WMO	World Meteorological Office

Disclaimer

This report is the product of the authors and responsibility rests with them for the accuracy of data included in this report. The findings, interpretation and conclusions presented do not necessarily reflect the views of SDC or Sida or of the Governments of Switzerland or Sweden.

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Executive Summary

This evaluation report is structured around the standard OECD-DAC Criteria, the Terms of Reference are attached as Annex 1.

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a membership organisation that was founded in 2007 by a group of African academics and researchers with an overarching goal to promote the uptake of sustainable forest management in Africa. It has benefited from three phases of support from both Swedish development assistance, starting in 2009 with a gap between the first and second phases, and Swiss support from 2011. Both current phases of support come to an end within the next 6 to 15 months. This evaluation concentrates on the current, third, phases of support.

AFF membership, currently around 2,500, now extends into almost all countries in Africa, giving AFF a continent-wide network and bridging the historic, geographical and linguistic barriers to intra-African communication on matters relating to tree and forests. Whilst there are wide differences of forest type, tree cover, product and service values between, and at times within countries, all African countries have some level of interest in trees and forests. This has increased recently with national and global concerns about climate change, biodiversity and wider sustainable development goals.

The AFF Constitution was written in 2007 and updated in 2012, it is not clearly evident that current practices follow exactly what is laid down in the Constitution. There is no charge for AFF membership and individual membership is the only category. Half of the current members work in academia or research institutions with the balance in public administration, civil society, journalism or commercial forestry companies. AFF operates through its members with a Secretariat, headed by the Executive Secretary, who is supported by a team of specialists on a range of topics and administrative personnel balanced by gender and language. The governance structure starts with the Members' Forum, open to all with a Chair and Vice-Chair elected for 5-year terms, which elects the 21 members of the Governing Council balanced across the five sub-regions. The Governing Council has a number of committees: 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 focuses mainly on skills-building and knowledge management. It offers skills transfer events in both physical and virtual formats and produces a wide range of studies on technical matters, as well as syllabus, curriculum and training materials. The donor funded projects provide the framework for the AFF workplan with members consulted to determine the specific focus of AFF activities within this framework. Publications are available on open access through its website, which also hosts open access journal articles. This material is of immense value, especially to those working in poorer countries with limited access to reference material. In addition to these activities, AFF has also provided contracted services to clients such as international and African agencies and institutions.

While the SDC and Sida projects evaluated here are broadly similar in overall content, in particular with their focus on the role of trees and forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, there are differences of emphasis between them. Both sought to strengthen national policies and governance as well as building capacity in African countries for engaging in global multilateral processes and delivering sustainable management of trees of forests. Both projects also supported identifying opportunities to use environmental goods and services to add value, thereby strengthening livelihoods, employment opportunities and national income.

In respect of **relevance**, the evaluation team concluded that both projects were highly relevant for their respective donors. While Africa as a whole makes a very limited contribution to global GHG emissions it faces huge challenges from climate change. This will have a severe effect on the forest

and tree resources of the continent and therefore directly affect the livelihoods and quality of life of its population. Herein lies the core justification for both donors to work through AFF to contribute to meeting these challenges.

Neither of the two projects includes much focus on the commercial forestry sector in Africa. In Central Africa, this is predominantly engaged in utilisation of woody material from natural forests while in East and southern Africa, as well as parts of West Africa, commercial forestry concentrates on extensive planted resources. Compared with the overall area of forest and tree cover in Africa, that devoted to commercial forestry is relatively small.

The focus on the extensive forest area, governance, empowerment, and small-scale commercialisation of non-wood forest products that characterises both projects is consequently relevant for the wider aim of improving and sustainably managing forest cover in Africa more generally. The two projects have good coherence and complementarity and it is unfortunate that it did not prove practicable to work with a single, jointly-supported project.

Both projects are also very relevant for AFF, which has created an impressive pan-African network through which it delivers knowledge, information, and training and skills-building. AFF is therefore an appropriate partner through which the two donors can engage with their target audience and stakeholder groups.

The activities supported by both projects largely relate to the context within which tree and forest-based activities are conducted and the modalities employed to enhance this. By and large they have not focused much on technical matters. However, there is increasing concern in many African countries about the diminishing level of knowledge on basic topics such as forest ecology, taxonomy and field practices, an issue not only in Africa but increasingly widespread. AFF needs to try to respond to and ameliorate this situation.

With regard to **effectiveness**, the AFF membership network is of considerable value in being able to transmit new knowledge and provide opportunities for skills improvement and it has members in 53 out of 54 countries in Africa. The wide range of material available on its open-access website, in both English and French, further enhances the value of the network. However, AFF members are predominantly graduates, with more than half in academia or research; successful *implementation* of new ideas and approaches will require both an enhanced focus on a conducive policy and governance framework as well as good awareness and understanding at field implementation level.

AFF has worked hard to engage with governments and with both regional and international agencies and institutions, such as the African Union and the regional economic communities, although its efforts have not always resulted in success beyond acknowledgement of the importance of trees and forests. AFF is also, of course, a small group with limited access, convening power and leverage. Given these provisos, AFF was nevertheless a good programme with which both of the donors could engage to deliver the projects under evaluation here.

Before considering the effectiveness of the results achieved by the projects, there are two important points to bear in mind. Firstly, COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions on meetings and movement that most governments instituted acted as a major constraint on AFF activities. The response by AFF seems to have been entirely proper: it did its best to adapt the way it worked by stopping or severely limiting cross-border travel and by accelerating the use of virtual means of communication. AFF dealt with this by recruiting additional experts at the national level to conduct in-depth country level studies to support regional experts who could not travel across borders. It also followed tight regulations in having the Secretariat staff work mainly from home. As a result of COVID-19, the planned progress of both projects was delayed and both were given no-cost time extensions.

The second point of concern relates to the logical frameworks. There were two projects, funded by two different donors, each of which had its own logical framework. The designs of these have substantial differences. The SDC logical framework lists types of input, but not the detail nor costs. The Sida logframe does not specify activities or inputs at all. The indicators and means of verification are only broadly expressed in the SDC logframe. The Sida logical framework goes into great detail with targets for each output and does specify that both quantitative and qualitative information is required but does not provide details on how the latter should be done. Having to work on two largely congruent projects with quite different logical frameworks added a non-trivial burden to AFF in addition to the burden of the requirement for parallel administrative control and reporting.

Both logical frameworks, but especially that from Sida, include indicators of achievement that far exceed the capacity of AFF to influence and for which it is effectively impossible to make a clear attribution to actions that AFF has made. This is particularly so in respect of the support given around engagement with climate change issues, national submissions such as NDCs and engagement with REDD+. While AFF can offer training and improve knowledge, it has no direct influence, let alone control, over how the improved knowledge and skills are used. Furthermore, particularly for NDCs, forests and trees will only be a small part of NDCs among the many sectors included. The contributions all sectors to the NDCs will depend on internal discussion at high levels to decide priorities and are therefore far beyond the capacity and ability of AFF to determine to any degree.

Two skills transfer events were observed. One - *Community of Practice (CoP) on 'advancing women in forestry in the context of climate change'* - was fully virtual, whilst the second - *Bankable Projects for accessing climate change funding* - was hybrid in format. The sample of attendees who returned the questionnaire were generally pleased with the events and felt that their level of understanding had increased.

A sample of publications was also reviewed and found to be largely well prepared, presented and accessed. One area with which the evaluation team had concerns was with materials relating to negotiations, which are a critical element in multilateral agreements such as that for climate change. The standard here was variable, although more recent materials show some marked improvement. This variability can be remedied but, as AFF is aware, it may require selection of experts from a wider pool to complement experience available within the membership and almost certainly at a higher cost. This applies particularly to new topics that are outside the main areas of expertise and experience of most members and will become increasingly important as forestry is progressively more embedded in wider concerns about land use overall and the need for ways to address these.

AFF's written materials and skills transfer events are both generally of a good standard, albeit with some room for improvement. It is fair to say that these have been largely well-delivered by AFF, corresponding to overall good effectiveness and efficiency. While the team has questions about specific information in some of the publications and notes the potential for improvement to skills transfer events, the overall quality and value of what AFF has done has been good and the outputs have been welcomed by those who responded to our survey. However, the deeper issue is the fact that AFF is a membership organisation which to a great extent directs its activities by the perceived 'wants' of its members, meaning that their more objectively judged 'needs' may not be met as effectively (this includes the necessity for AFF to maintain the funding it requires in order to survive).

The **impact** from the support provided by the two projects was considered under three headings. Firstly, *Contribution*, which looked at the impact of what AFF did at network, country and local levels as well as the impact of AFF knowledge products for its network and for the African continent and beyond; secondly, *Attribution to AFF*, which addressed policy, institutional and transformational changes at different levels; and thirdly, *Attribution to SDC/Sida support*, which considered whether

and to what extent the outcomes achieved could be attributed to the donors' support and whether this support had induced transformational changes to AFF and more widely.

AFF published the results of the uptake of its resources and training events between 2017 and 2022. It is clear from this and the responses to questionnaires from the evaluators that AFF resources are highly appreciated and that at least some people have made use of them to enhance their work. Although we can draw attention to the use made of the AFF resources, it is impossible for us to determine whether and how this improved the wider aims of livelihoods, sustainable forest management and forest landscape restoration. AFF has provided tools for all of these and although one may assume that they have been applied, measuring the value of this application was impossible as part of this evaluation. In essence, AFF has provided access to information and improved skills of its members; this should have wider impact but its contribution cannot be measured.

To try to obtain at least some objective information on whether any transformational change may be attributed to AFF activities supported by the projects, the team analysed a time series of the number of interventions by African representatives at UNFCCC, IPCC, UNFF and FAO COFO recorded in *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* reports. The results may not show any influence of AFF whatsoever, given the limitations of the study and the mixture of results seen. However, AFF's influence may perhaps be conjectured, as it is certain that — apart from within UNFF, which is a unique case¹ — African interventions have either increased or not decreased significantly in any of these fora.

The question of attribution of impact to SDC/Sida support to AFF can be very simply answered in that without this support AFF would not have been able to function and therefore whatever its activities have achieved during the third phase of the donors' projects is directly attributable to their support.

Overall, and taking into account the difficulties of assessing impact, our conclusion is that supported AFF activities certainly had direct positive impact on those engaged and are likely to have had wider impact but as its activities are continent-wide and only engage a small proportion of the whole suite of relevant actors, the wider impact can only be conjectured.

The **sustainability** of AFF is the issue raising the greatest concern in the evaluation. Although both projects intended that AFF should make progress towards a diversified funding base, very little progress has been achieved on this aim. AFF has submitted a number of grant applications without success and its other commissioned work has raised relatively insignificant amounts of finance compared with that needed. The result is that when these current projects end, unless the current donors come forward with further support, AFF is in danger of ceasing through lack of funding.

The disruptive effects of the COVID-19 restrictions are at least part of the reason for the lack of progress. AFF commissioned a task force to look at options, which were then published in AFF's Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan, but while this identified possibilities it did not delve into detail. To a large degree, AFF is still in many ways the same organisation it was in 2007, albeit rather bigger and with many years of experience. It now needs to have a clearer image of what it should be and do, which requires a detailed strategic review.

The structure and environment of national and global issues which affect trees and forests in Africa is very different now from when AFF was conceived and begun. The canvas is broader, encompassing new ideas especially in its view of trees and forests being within the wider spectrum of sustainable landscape management as opposed to the historic view of forests being largely seen and managed separately. The members are generally highly appreciative of all that AFF does but there are lingering

¹ African visibility appears to have benefitted at a specific period in its history from the efforts made by AFF, Peter Gondo, and the AU, as reported in interviews conducted by members of the evaluation team.

questions on the need for AFF to address broader topics, such as defining viable interventions, building skills and partnerships, relevant to the wider framework of sustainable land management, within which forests are trees are viewed by others, and the issue of who should decide this.

Although AFF is a membership organisation, its activities are not paid for by its members but, to date, largely by the two donors, Sweden and Switzerland. The question of diversifying the funding base was raised when the current projects were being appraised and finalised, and both logical frameworks make reference to this and include activities supportive of this aim. However, it is not clear that the need to diversify the funding base was pressed strongly during delivery of the current projects. To a substantial extent, this can be attributed to the need for AFF to make major changes to its working practices as a response to the effects of COVID-19, which resulted in delays and revisions to the agreed projects.

The question of the structure of AFF as a membership organisation and the question of how it should be funded are interlinked to a considerable degree. The economic status of a substantial proportion of AFF members precludes AFF being financially supported by direct contributions from its members. AFF must therefore be supported either directly by donors or by undertaking activities sponsored by other agencies, national governments, or a combination of these sources, together with possible support from philanthropic organisations and perhaps including some contracted work for the private sector.

Because most African governments' finances must be used to address many pressing immediate demands which tend to take precedence over trees and forests, in reality all the sources of finance for AFF, apart from the philanthropic, are likely to originate in donor funds, such as those for climate change, biodiversity, *etc.*; these are usually very large funds disbursed in tranches through intermediate agencies such as FAO or international NGOs.

The commercial timber sector could also be a possible source of finance but links between AFF and this sector are quite limited. In Africa, commercial entities working with natural forests are not usually forward-integrated into more than primary processing and those that might be interested in AFF are probably also investing in sound resource management and/or certification and likely to already be undertaking their own skills-building. Meanwhile, the forest industry sector based on large-scale plantations is often highly integrated and engaged in global commodity trade in pulp, paper, boards and sawnwood, with most already undertaking all their own research and training, and few AFF members are engaged in this sub-sector.

The concluding section of this report includes an outline SWOT analysis of AFF that highlights the opportunities for AFF and the threats to its continued existence. It recommends separation of the 'membership' function from that of wider fund-raising to support continuation of the key functions of commissioning and disseminating knowledge-building materials and providing skills-building opportunities. The fund-raising activities can then support the membership function.

The 12 recommendations derived from the concluding section lay out the key points that need addressing but the most critical of these is that some support from current and/or new donors is required so that AFF can have the opportunity to transition to a hybrid funding model rather than one which is virtually completely dependent on direct donor support. Without such transitional support AFF will not be able to work towards a new funding regime. If AFF were to collapse from lack of funding, there would be a serious loss of the valuable products and services it has produced and can continue to produce given its unique advantages, especially given its Africa-wide network. If AFF were to allowed to collapse, its recreation would be very expensive and there would be a gap of several years before any new replacement, even assuming funding could be found for it, would be able to match the current value AFF provides to Africa and more widely.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The extent and type of forest and its relative value varies widely across the African continent. There is a large block of closed lowland moist forest within the Congo Basin that also extends along the coast of West Africa. Surrounding this mass of closed forest, the forest type changes as one moves into land of decreasing annual rainfall, first, to seasonal forest, then into dry woodlands and, ultimately, savanna that grades into desert in the Sahara, inland from the Red Sea in the northeast and, in the southwest, inland from the South Atlantic ocean. As well as horizontal forest type variation, with mangrove forests in some coastal areas, there is also vertical variation, with montane closed forests at higher elevations than the main masses of closed forests.

The moist forest regions host high biodiversity and, where they occur in large masses, are crucial drivers of the rainfall pattern within and beyond them through the biotic pump effect. Human population density in moist forests is much lower than in the drier forests and woodlands but poorly controlled logging for hardwood timber and conversion to other land uses has led to fragmentation in recent decades.

In dry forests and savannas, the effects of natural fire are a major ecological factor, although this has been heavily assisted by human-caused fires, and fire risk reduction practices are no longer applied as widely as in the past. Other influences on dry forest and savanna areas include extensive conversion for agricultural crops and livestock use at subsistence and commercial scales. While hardwood timber from dry forests is far less important than that from moist forests, these forests provide valuable NTFPs including diverse gums and resins. The savanna regions are also important for their plains' fauna, which underpins ecotourism in many countries.

The trees and forests of Africa provide products and services that underpin economic activity and livelihoods at a range of scales. Many forest services are poorly recognised and often unvalued, meaning that they are not adequately reflected in high-level decision making. This is particularly so for those that are directly consumed rather than marketed. Each country has a different palette of values from its trees and forests but there are many common issues that apply with differing importance to all countries in Africa. Issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation (M&A), biodiversity conservation and maintenance of water supplies transcend national boundaries and require cooperation to optimise forest values that contribute to these efforts.

Historically, communications between countries within the African continent tended to be defined by their colonial history and language and were usually largely limited to contact between immediate neighbours. There was, however, more contact in respect of forestry research through organisations such as the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO). This was founded in 1892 and many forestry research units in newly independent African states joined it. In 1978, the International Council for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) was established with regional offices across Africa. This complemented the more mainstream forestry work undertaken by the Forestry Department of FAO that has provided statistics as well as technical publications and guidance for policy and legislation since its founding in 1945.

The 1970s saw a rise in concern about social forestry, which emphasised the importance of engaging with communities on user rights to products and services from forests and trees through revised policies, legislation and planning systems for the management of trees and forests. Subsequent decades have seen multilateral agreement on the Rio Conventions, including a well-funded forest-related agenda within the UNFCCC, and other new institutions such as UNFF and instruments, such

as the Sustainable Development Goals, leading to increased need for knowledge and skills for those working with trees and forests.

Since the 1970s, many countries in Africa, which had initially followed a colonial tradition of forest protection and management, maintaining forest research services, tree seed centres, and providing extension services, have over time reduced their levels of domestic funding for forests and trees. Meanwhile, though, increasing environmental concerns over the way forests had been managed meant donors had a much wider range of issues needing funding on which to focus their support for trees and forests. There was a general trend for donors to focus on matters such as policies and legislation and for forest management to be undertaken by private enterprises. To promote sustainable forest management, the African Forest Research Network at the African Academy of Sciences implemented a two-year project in 2003 on Lessons Learnt on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa funded by Sida; the findings of this project led to the formation of the African Forest Forum (AFF) in 2007.

Swedish support for the Secretariat and specific activities covered the period 2009 to 2012 and again from 2014 to 2019. Swiss support was provided for the period from November 2011 to the end of 2014 with a second phase following from 2015 to 2017. The combined support from these two donors built up AFF as a membership-based organisation which focused on policy and advocacy, capacity-building and skills development, and learning, knowledge generation and information.

Reflecting the global commitment to climate change issues, both donors have given this topic a strong focus in their support. At the same time, gender and youth equity, as well as promotion of sustainable livelihoods, often around trade in NTFPs, have featured strongly, with Sida support also giving attention to renewable energy, mainly from biofuels.

AFF has continued to focus on generating and making available knowledge-building products and providing support to skills training for the African continent in the broad context of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). Membership, which is free, is currently limited to individuals but its publications and a large number of open access materials from outside AFF have been made freely available on its website. In parallel, it has developed a range of skills transfer modalities including webinars and both virtual and in-person training events, again available to both members and non-members. Those benefiting from AFF products and services come from a wide range of countries with varying levels of access to finance. Along with the availability of information free of charge, access to training events—free for virtual ones and with costs usually met by AFF for physical ones—has been of particular benefit to members in poorer countries.

As the latest tranche of joint support from Switzerland and Sweden is coming to an end, this evaluation has been undertaken to review the current phase of support and draw conclusions on how AFF can continue into the future.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology followed was straightforward, although some of the actual tasks proved to be challenging. The available literature relating to the programmes was reviewed and summarised during the inception period to inform the preparation of the evaluation matrix. Engagement with the actors involved in programme formulation and delivery, as well as representatives of actual and potential stakeholder groups, was undertaken using a variety of modalities, but apart from meeting individuals who are based in Nairobi in person communications were predominantly through questionnaires and a range of virtual communications. The aim was to produce a report which is constructive and seen by the two donors and AFF as balanced and fair.

People interviewed spoke 'off the record' and no comments recorded have been personally attributed. Questions were open-ended to encourage people to expand on interesting topics and ideas. One limitation, however, was that interviewing the full list of those whom we desired to interview was in some cases stymied by poor communications.

The team had the opportunity to sit in on two training events and the Members' Forum, which proved very helpful. Questionnaires were sent out in English and French to all participants in the training events viewed and to the membership at large.

In drawing up this report, we have focused on forming opinions based on a realistic view of what should be possible, not a theoretical 'gold standard.' The context in which activities have been conducted was recognised and a simple test used which compares what is observed with what could be reasonably expected. No project or programme of this nature can be expected to run totally smoothly; there are always challenges and difficulties that inhibit or constrain progress, some anticipated and others not, COVID-19 is a clear example of what can happen.

1.3 *AFF Membership*

The AFF publication, *Access, uptake and use of knowledge products developed by the African Forest Forum: 2008-2018*, is based on a survey, which gives information on the age profile of the members who responded and on their employment. About one quarter each were in academia or research or serving as forest officers and 85% were in the productive age range of 25 to 54. In respect of geographical distribution of survey respondents, 42% were in East Africa and 35% in West Africa, with both Central Africa (8%) and southern Africa (10%) rather under-represented. The Central Africa region includes the bulk of the main African moist forest mass and southern Africa, most of the productive plantations on the continent.

The same publication also gives figures for the geographical spread of the full membership, albeit with slightly different categories. The figures are western Africa (611 – 35%), followed by eastern Africa (470 – 27%), southern Africa (336 – 19%) and northeastern Africa (331 – 19%). It is presumed that the figure for western Africa includes Central Africa but it is interesting that the responses to the survey on use of knowledge products suggest that the membership there did not respond to the same degree, proportionally, as that in other regions. It is also unfortunate that the various regional groupings do not appear to be consistent.

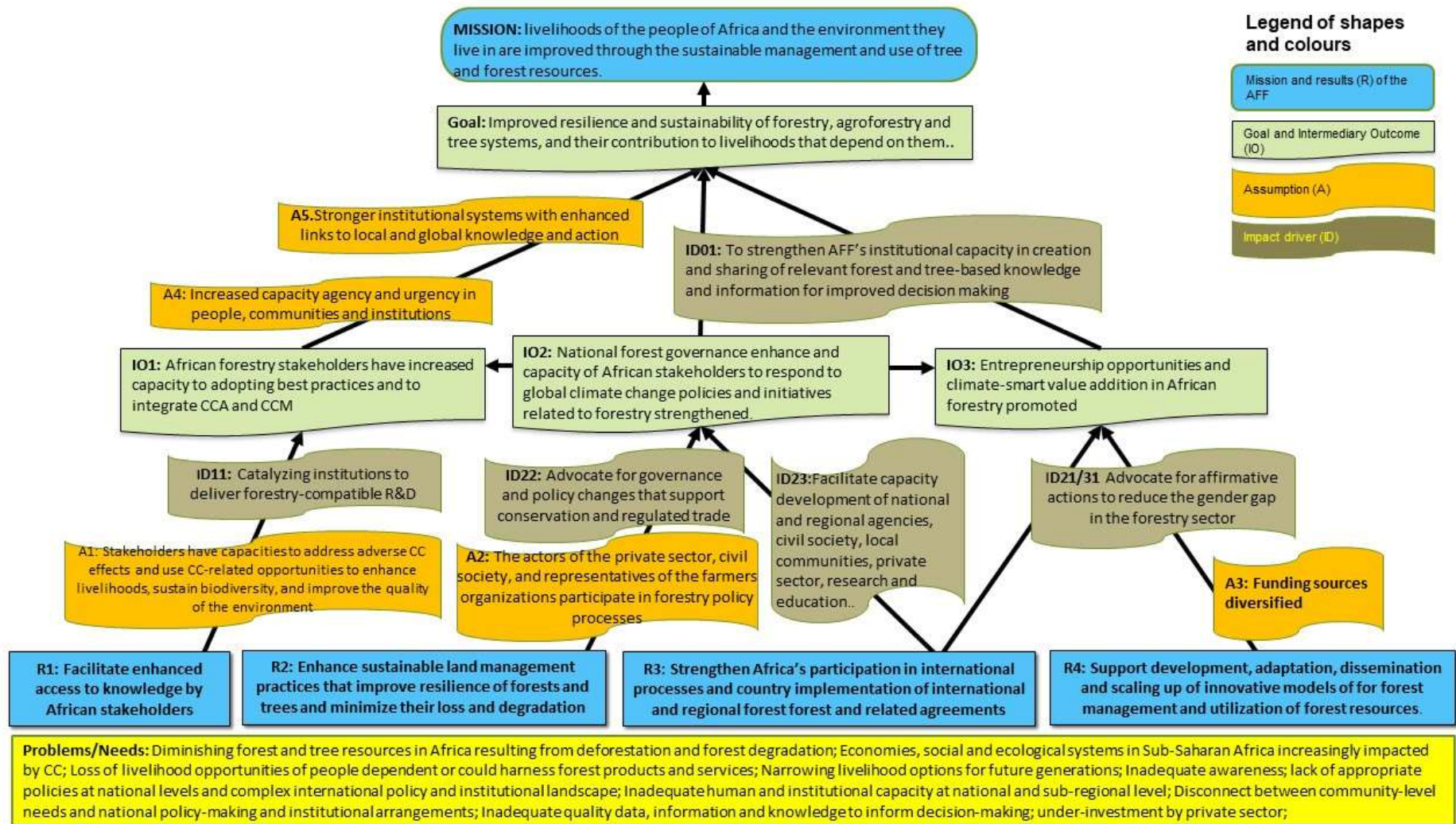
The present evaluation team sent a survey to all members, for which the geographical spread of respondents is as follows: western Africa – 48%, Central Africa – 5%, East Africa – 28%, southern Africa – 17% and northeastern Africa – 2%. This means that Central Africa, southern Africa and northeastern Africa are under-represented among our respondents compared with the membership as whole, while western Africa is over-represented, which may bias the results.

1.4 *Consolidated Theory of Change*

The diagram in Figure 1 below has been generated by the team to provide an overview of both the Swiss and the Swedish support projects together since this is a joint evaluation of both. It starts with a problem summary and works through to an overarching mission for AFF, identifying four broad results. The four results work through impact drivers and assumptions leading to three intermediary outcomes. These outcomes lead into the goal and thus to achievement of the AFF mission.

There is an important split of the four results into two categories, which is further examined in the report. This is that while results R1 and R4 essentially come directly from activities over which AFF largely has control, results R2 and R3 accrue through the subsequent uptake by others over whom AFF has limited or no direct control. Success in all results is required to achieve the AFF goal and mission. Figure 2 below in Section 3.1 below provides a reconstructed theory of change for AFF itself, illustrating the broad aims it seeks to achieve.

Figure 1 Combined Theory of Change for SDC and Sida Support



2 Findings

2.1 Relevance

2.1.1 Alignment with donor

The key evaluation questions are:

- Have the main goals and objectives of AFF been relevant throughout in relation to the missions and the objectives of the SDC GPCCE (Global Programme for Climate Change and Environment) and Sida's regional strategy? Are they 'coherent'?
- Have the Swedish and Swiss contributions been complementary? Have these contributed, in combination, to the AFF's overall institutional mandate?
- To what extent has funding been aligned with/relevant to the needs and priorities of the AFF, SDC GPCCE and Sida?

The SDC Phase 3 project documentation draws specific attention to the fact that while Africa as a whole makes a very limited contribution to global GHG emissions it faces huge challenges from climate change. This will have a severe effect on the forest and tree resources of the continent and therefore directly affect the livelihoods and quality of life of its population. It also notes that these forest and tree resources, in addition to their other values, hold some 9.8 billion tonnes of carbon.

Resilience through adaptation to climate change is of particularly critical importance for Africa. Closed moist forests are highly complex ecosystems that are also crucial to hydrological balance and host a web of biodiversity but are vulnerable to even relatively minor changes. Dry forests and woodlands are generally ecologically simpler and more robust, but the effects of climate change pose a direct threat to a larger number of people because of the direct livelihood support they provide to a much larger human population. There is thus mutual benefit for both the African population and the wider global community in improving the protection and management of Africa's forests and trees, for both adaptation and mitigation.

The Swiss strategy for support to AFF identifies four coherent strands. The first strand, *To strengthen capacity of African forestry stakeholders in adopting best practices that integrate both adaptation and mitigation options in response to the impacts of climate change and variability to biophysical and social systems in different landscapes*, is focused on improving the stewardship of the resource base. This is clearly essential for sustainable forest management and is within the mandate and capacity of AFF to deliver. Many AFF members are closely involved in such activities and it has been providing support to them since its inception.

The second strand, *To enhance national forest governance by strengthening the capacity of African stakeholders to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives related to forestry*, is obviously essential for creating an enabling and supportive operating environment and highly relevant to SDC. It is also relevant to AFF but in parallel with its other aims. The global policy framework, especially for climate change, is very much wider than simply technical forestry and, while some AFF members and beneficiaries have expertise in climate change issues directly related to forests, relatively few have significant expertise in implementing agreements that require engagement with issues outside the technical forestry sector. This therefore demands that AFF brings in skills and experience from outside the traditional forestry sector boundaries or engages or even integrates work with organisations working in related sectors, particularly agriculture but also climate change, biodiversity, water and community development. Ideally AFF would be part of a holistic network covering all aspects of land restoration and management.

Furthermore, in order to work with African stakeholders, essentially African governments, to respond to the Paris Agreement and related policies and initiatives. AFF is aware of the need to engage with people well outside its membership and from the highest levels of governments and has started work on this matter, which places a severely demanding task on the shoulders of AFF as a small and quite tightly focused organisation.

The third strand, *To promote entrepreneurship opportunities and technologically efficient means for value addition in African forestry, including those related to climate change that enhance livelihoods, national incomes and employment*, is a reasonable one to place on AFF, albeit demanding in scope. Value addition encompasses a wide range of opportunities. At its most basic is perhaps value addition in the timber processing industry. Here, Africa in general, with a few exceptions, is well behind Asia and Latin America in respect of value-added processing of timber from natural forests. Trade statistics show relatively little value-added beyond sawn timber compared with the other two tropical regions, which process and export substantial quantities of secondary processed forest products such as mouldings and joinery work as well as high quality veneered products and even furniture.

There is also, of course, a very substantial African resource of planted forests, mainly of *Pinus* and *Eucalyptus* species, which produce sawn wood, panels, pulp and paper products. The plantations and the processing capacity for them lie mainly in South Africa and Eswatini with substantial areas also in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The majority of these plantations and their associated processing industries are now run by private commercial companies rather than public forestry agencies, although historically this was not the case. AFF does not have corporate members nor does it appear to have many members working for private forestry companies, meaning its level of engagement with the commercial forestry sector has always been relatively limited.

The third strand also includes non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as gums and resins, which are of particular importance in the dry forest regions of the continent and have been a focus of AFF from its early days. The structure of the supply chains for these engages local people more fully than does the commercial plantation sector, which has not been seen as a high priority for AFF, as the resource is extensive rather than intensive and local people can more readily be brought into managing and harvesting it. There is, in addition, the question of other livelihood products from natural forests and from trees outside forests and here AFF is undoubtedly well placed to engage with key stakeholders through its links with the World Agroforestry Centre and with national forestry agencies.

The fourth strand, *To strengthen AFF's institutional capacity in creation and sharing of relevant forest- and tree-based knowledge and information for improved decision-making*, is an overarching one on which the first three strands depend. In respect of its relevance, it obviously relates clearly to the general activities that AFF has been undertaking since its creation but, as noted above in respect of the second and third strands, at times it requires AFF to move beyond its historic membership and, particularly, to engage with the commercial forestry sector and those in public service outside the forestry sector but who are responsible for decision-making that influences forests.

Overall, while the Swiss support has clearly been relevant to the mandate of SDC GPCCE as noted above, AFF has had to move beyond its established membership to assist countries to have enhanced engagement at the global level and to secure fluent engagement with the commercial forestry sector. Whilst this is necessary for AFF it is important to examine whether the support given has been adequate in terms of resources to enable AFF to expand its reach successfully into these new areas.

With regard to the Swedish support, its relevance requires congruence with their international development cooperation policy and strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa. This can be summarised as:

- Participation of African countries in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs);
- Actions to address climate change, including by implementing NDCs, which encompass mitigation and adaptation, and through climate-resilient development, especially by the private sector;
- Increased investments in renewable energy;
- Sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems through sustainable use of ecosystem services, sustainable use of natural resources, preservation of biodiversity and more productive and sustainable agricultural systems.

These four strategic foci are also expected to respect and contribute to the cross-cutting areas of a raised gender focus; capacity building in agencies, academia, civil society, and the media; and expanding knowledge through knowledge generation and information-sharing.

AFF already had a track record in the cross-cutting areas of capacity-building, expanding knowledge and information-sharing as part of its core mandate and existing activities, and it is currently expanding its attention to gender issues, having recently successfully completed a two-week webinar on building a Community of Practice on women, forestry and climate change. It also has a focus on relevant multilateral environmental agreements, both in terms of implementation as well as in capacity-building for participating in international environmental policy-making at the highest levels, including UNFF, UNFCCC, UNCCD, and CBD, through a range of publications and training materials (see Annex 2 for a detailed review of a sample of these), and with increasing attention being paid to forest-related action on climate change and climate-related finance.

While there is room for improvement on some of the specifics, AFF recognises the importance of multilateral engagement for forests on the ground and is working to address this. (See the evaluators' spreadsheet on African negotiating interventions made over time in several international forest-related agreements, in Section 2.4.1 below, for a further view of potential effectiveness and impact in training African negotiators on multilateral negotiating.)

Similarly, AFF's work encompasses recognition of the importance of trees outside forests—for example, as part of sustainable agricultural systems, and AFF has a body of materials on topics of relevance to these.

Thus, in terms of the relevance of Swedish support for AFF and for Swedish international development policy, there are numerous ways in which Swedish development policy and AFF's work coincide; Swedish support is therefore relevant to both.

On the question of overall alignment and coherence, as the Swiss and Swedish support projects are both closely aligned with/relevant to the needs and priorities of the SDC GPCCE and Sida they are clearly complementary, but this does raise the question as to whether it would have been preferable for the two donors to jointly support a single project rather than having two separate but very similar projects (see more about this under Efficiency, subsection 2.3.1).

2.1.2 Demand responsiveness

The key evaluation questions here are:

1. Have the needs and demands of the pre-defined target groups been addressed, including Africa and immediate users of project results (e.g. policymakers, negotiators, trainers)?

2. How far is AFF aligned with Agenda 2030? Paris Agreement (2015)? Broader sustainable development frameworks?
3. How has the content of the work evolved over the years? Is the content of the work, the membership/network approach and the theory of change of the AFF still relevant when considering the priorities of African countries and the realities of target groups and forest environments?
4. Is AFF working in a programmatic way? If so, how? Is the set-up, with two main programmes (financed by SDC and Sida) contributing to a broader AFF programmatic approach relevant?
5. Is AFF's approach strategic? How could its strategic relevance have been improved?
6. Have donor requirements inhibited AFF responsiveness?

Both projects identify a wide range of target beneficiaries. The Swiss project notes the target group as *African Forest Forum members who regularly receive information from AFF. They include, but are not limited to, policy makers, forest managers, academia, research, and public*, adding that the open access to AFF material also gives opportunity to the wider public to use them. The Swedish project states generically that the key actors being addressed are local communities, civil societies, private sector, national governments, academia and research.

AFF products and services are focused on increasing knowledge through studies, webinars and skills-building events. Its written materials are all open access and therefore widely available to anyone who accesses the website. Webinars and training events are open to members and non-members, with numbers accessing physical training events being limited. The topics chosen by AFF for written material and skills building are selected by the Secretariat together with experts and consultants and informed by the views of its members within the broad areas agreed by the donors.

Reaching the target audiences specified by the two donors requires that AFF is able to engage with the groups specified and herein lies perhaps the greatest vulnerability. In essence, AFF can make available opportunities for knowledge and skills improvement but it cannot directly ensure that these opportunities are taken up by all who would benefit from them. As a result, there will inevitably be slower progress at the top level at which donors would like to see changes than if AFF were able to target key personnel directly. As a counter to this, the wide network of members that AFF has created covers nearly all African countries, meaning it has greater breadth, if less depth, than a donor country might be able to cover directly.

On AFF's alignment with Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement (2015) and broader sustainable development frameworks, its focus on SFM effectively ensures that it is, since SFM is by definition so aligned. With regard to evolution of AFF's work over the years, one can observe the increasing focus on climate change-related publications and skills-building events during the period of support from 2018. During the current project phase, AFF has designed and undertaken a well-conceived approach to its support for the broad forest and tree sector within African countries' response to climate change. This approach addresses mitigation and adaptation as well as the Sida-supported work on biofuels, along with the other major area of Swiss focus which is commercialisation of gums and resins that represent a major opportunity for dry forest areas.

Dry forests face severe challenges in trying to secure REDD+ funding. They generally have lower carbon stocks than moist forests, but are often more fragmented and also subject to natural changes in structure and extent as a result of long-term variation in rainfall patterns. Consequently, MRV can be more costly but the potential payments lower than in more stable and uniform forests. The focus on gums and resins, and potentially other NTFPs, is therefore valuable and appropriate. Dry forests

also produce fruits, mushrooms and other foodstuffs that are of particular value in hunger periods. It should also be noted that, given that REDD+ is supposed to include conservation and SFM, one area in which AFF could potentially contribute for the bilateral or multilateral level could be to research the possibility of broadening REDD+ funding for dry forest countries, alongside a simplification of measurement, verification, and reporting systems, and to train negotiators to work toward this.

The AFF stepwise approach, which is applied generally to all its activities, can be summarised as follows:

- Initial individual country studies by national consultants to clarify the problem and identify key issues, which are then assembled into regional studies. The initial studies include assessment of policies and legislation, current relevant activities and identification of key currently and potentially engaged stakeholder groups;
- These initial studies are then synthesised and lead into more detailed studies to further elaborate skills gaps and the potential value of knowledge products and skills building events;
- The third step is to commission authors selected to prepare publications from national and regional studies, experts for webinars and trainers for skills building events, which AFF then delivers through in-person and virtual events.

The range and depth of products is determined based on the needs identified and the extent to which the materials will be of interest to a small group of countries or to a wider regional or continent-wide audience. One or two studies may be produced or a much more substantial set of materials such as that prepared as the eight-volume 2019 compendium on climate change, which together encompass the basic science, carbon markets and trade, climate modelling, and international dialogues, processes and mechanisms. Specific volumes within this compendium are designed for professional training, technical training and short courses. This approach appears to be well-suited to the differing needs of the diverse target groups addressed by AFF.

The process is controlled by preparing terms of reference and then asking for bids to undertake the studies. Potential candidates are usually, but not always, AFF members and are mainly from the continent. AFF has recognised that advertising these opportunities through the website means mainly members will respond and is also discussing whether improved fees may be required to ensure the best candidates are selected. The resulting papers are then subjected to internal review and, in the case of the more comprehensive products, peer review and validation through a webinar. This process frequently results in publications of a high standard, although this is not always the case.

It is noted that AFF is focusing on relatively new and broader topics than the issues of technical forestry on which it has traditionally focused. This suggests that for topics that are new and/or outside the expertise of the pool from which AFF has historically recruited consultants it may be necessary to modify and adapt the recruitment process. It is important that AFF maintains the high standards that characterise most but not all of its outputs and it is committed to doing this. There also appears to be a missed opportunity here to engage younger people by giving them attachment to more senior consultants, who can then mentor the less experienced partners.

With regard to AFF's approach and taking the definition that a programmatic approach should be strategic and undertake work to benefit the organisation as a whole, it is evident that AFF is working in a programmatic way and that the way in which the two donor projects have been formulated supports this approach. However, while the diagram used to summarise the programmatic approach is clear, it does not make explicit the complexities of the cross-cutting 'programmes' nor the interdependencies and overlaps of some programmes.



Programme 1, which could be edited to read *Better protection² and management of forests and trees*, is the core aim of AFF and of the two donors. Programmes 2, 3 and 4 refer to strategies that can be employed within effective policies and governance, which are themselves noted in cross-cutting Programme 5. AFF outputs and activities, summarised in Programmes 6 and 7, are applied across the board. Programmes 2, 3 and 4 also have mutual cross-linkages and can be delivered concurrently with varying degrees of priority and focus.

The way in which both the Swiss and Swedish support has been structured is coherent with the

AFF programmatic approach. Swiss support Objective 4, *To strengthen AFF's institutional capacity in developing and sharing relevant forest and tree-based knowledge and information for improved decision making*, relates directly to AFF Programmes 6 and 7 as does Swedish support Component 5, *Strengthening AFF as an institution*, although in both cases there are overlaps. Overall, however, the support from both donors is supportive of and coherent with the AFF programmatic structure.

AFF's Annual Reports for 2020 and 2021 to both donors clearly lay out how AFF has applied the synergies between the two projects through complementary activities and joint activities. It is a moot point now as to whether combining the inputs of both donors into a single block of support would have been beneficial, but it would have avoided duplication in reporting and simplified administration, although the nuanced differences in focus of the two donors might have been lost. It is understood that SDC wanted to provide more generic and less tightly defined support than did Sida. At this time, with Swiss funding finishing by the end of 2022 and Swedish support finishing in 2023/24, it is open to question whether the resources that went to duplicative reporting and administration work during the current phase of support could have been more advantageously used for giving more attention to AFF continuity after this support ends.

² While forest management includes protection, it is often overlooked and it could be worth emphasising it here.

2.2 *Effectiveness*

AFF focuses on knowledge management products, such as studies, reviews, and training materials for use by others, as well as offering training events, both physically and virtually, to people across the whole of Africa at no charge. Its membership reaches nearly every African country and it has established good links across Africa in both francophone and anglophone regions and, increasingly, in lusophone countries. The publications and training events that AFF provides build skills, expertise, and capacity, although of course AFF has no way of ensuring that these are used by anyone, including those at the highest levels of national or regional policy-making.

In this evaluation we have analysed examples of a range of publications and have observed two online training events as well as the AFF Members' Forum. It is clear to us that AFF is much appreciated by its members and, as far as we can establish, its products are also valued, as evidenced by the number of times materials on its open access website have been accessed and the large numbers of applicants for virtual and physical training events. We have received and analysed comments from participants in the two training events that we sat in on and in both cases, respondents were generally satisfied with and appreciative of the opportunity to participate and felt that their level of knowledge had been increased (see Annex 3 and Annex 4 for further information).

The logical frameworks for both the Swiss and Swedish support projects articulate three of their criteria for success as 1) changes at national level in the use of forest resources, 2) the uptake and application of the benefits of new knowledge and skills inculcated by AFF or 3) increase in country-level responses in international fora. Time constraints do not allow us in this evaluation to locate and assess information relevant to criterion 1 and for criteria 2 and 3, even assuming relevant information exists, attributing changes to AFF support would be impossible.

Despite its continent-wide mandate, AFF's leverage, convening power and influence are all very limited given that it is a very small organisation. It has engaged, and continues to engage, with regional African organisations such as ECOWAS, EAC, SADC, as well as the African Union and the AfDB and has raised Africa's visibility in the UNFF. But in global fora such as under the UNFCCC, CBD, or UNCCD, trees and forests are usually a relatively small proportion of the overall interests of each Party.

Consequently, we can only provide a view on the effectiveness of AFF outputs in relation to those instruments in terms of the quality of the relevant materials AFF has produced and the extent to which they have been accessed. The Annual Project Reports to SDC and Sida by AFF give useful information on findings such as the current policy and governance framework in countries where studies have been undertaken, and on the relative level of progress toward the national-level outcomes that both donors are seeking. However, these are the results from the studies that AFF has commissioned, and cannot in themselves lead to achievement of the changes that are necessary; they have merely identified the problems that need to be tackled.

We have no information, and therefore cannot provide any useful judgment, on whether the changes at the highest level that donors are seeking have been achieved, although we can offer a view on whether what AFF has provided is potentially helpful to these desired outcomes, and we judge it to be necessary to achieve such outcomes, although by itself it is not sufficient without more inputs, or more inputs targeted to that level. See our recommendations for more on this.

2.2.1 *Results delivery*

The key evaluation questions here are:

1. To what extent have the objectives and outcomes of the SDC/SIDA-funded programmes been achieved?
2. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
3. Have resilience and sustainability of forestry, agro-forestry and tree systems improved?
4. Has sub-regional/regional economic integration been fostered, given the transboundary nature of forests?
5. Have forests and trees been fostered as sources of renewable energy?

COVID-19 acted as a major constraint on progress due to its effect on AFF activities. In addition to the direct effects of this disease on the populations of African countries, lockdowns, restrictions on travel and face-to-face meetings all required significant adjustment to the way in which AFF could operate. AFF prepared a business continuity plan and adapted to the pandemic by making greater use of virtual communications and desktop studies while also using national rather than regional consultants when cross-border travel was prohibited. In recognition of the delays, both donors have extended their support period by one year, SDC through to December 2022 and Sida through to September 2023.

Additionally, although the current phase of the Swiss support started in November 2018, there were delays in recruitment of new staff members during 2019 due to difficulties in finding candidates who were appropriate as well as available. It was assumed that this effort could easily continue in 2020 but the COVID-19 outbreak put the brakes on it. As for the Sida project, the current phase only started in September 2019 and had not really progressed beyond preliminary activities when COVID-19 caused for a major change in approach.

With the resultant extension of funding by both donors, the timing of activities originally envisaged is now outdated. The delays and changes caused by COVID-19 restrictions that resulted in project prolongation by both donors have meant that uncompleted tasks are carried forward into the extended time frame. A significant number of planned activities have been brought in-house during this period and will be completed by Secretariat personnel rather than contracted out.

2.2.2 Membership and Outreach

The key evaluation questions here are:

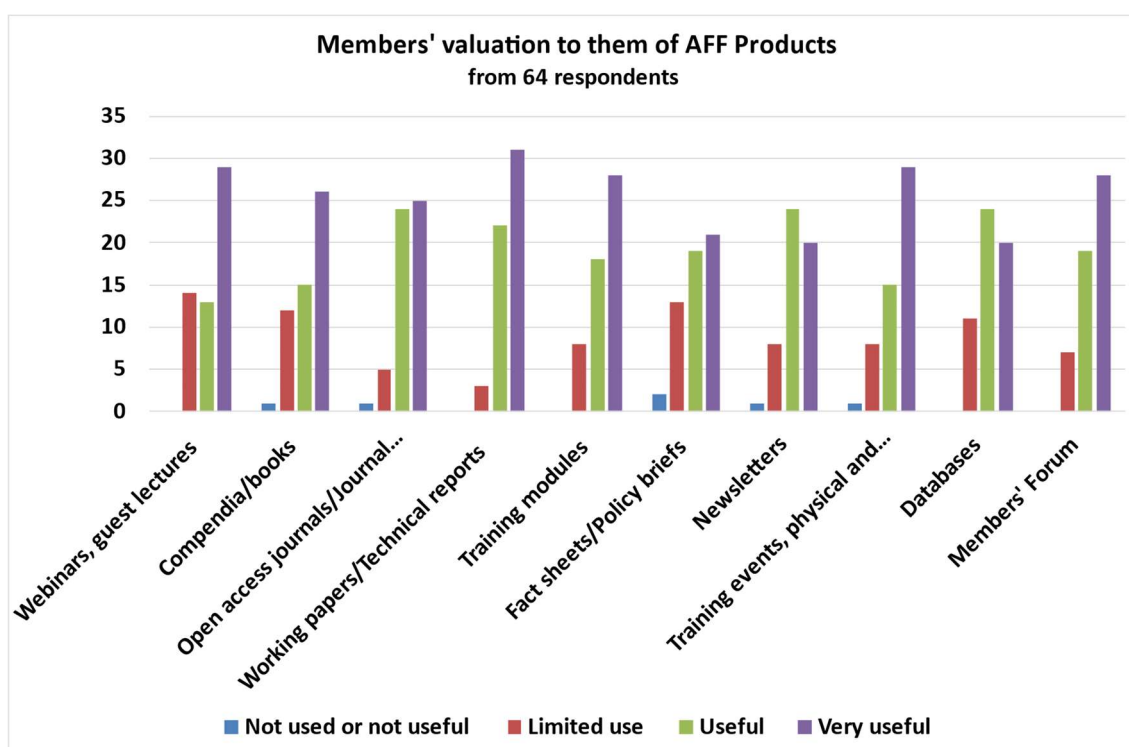
1. Has the AFF membership approach led to effective outreach at subnational, national, regional and/or global levels?
2. Have local communities, civil societies, private sector, national governments benefitted from AFF activities as well as members in public services, academia and research?
3. Is the current membership structure adequate and appropriate, have alternatives been considered?
4. Has AFF worked specifically to include women, youth, and/or other marginalised groups among its beneficiaries?
5. Has AFF worked towards increasing the representation of women, youth, the private sector, civil society, beneficiaries/users of AFF efforts, and individuals and institutions in the non-forest sector in AFF membership?

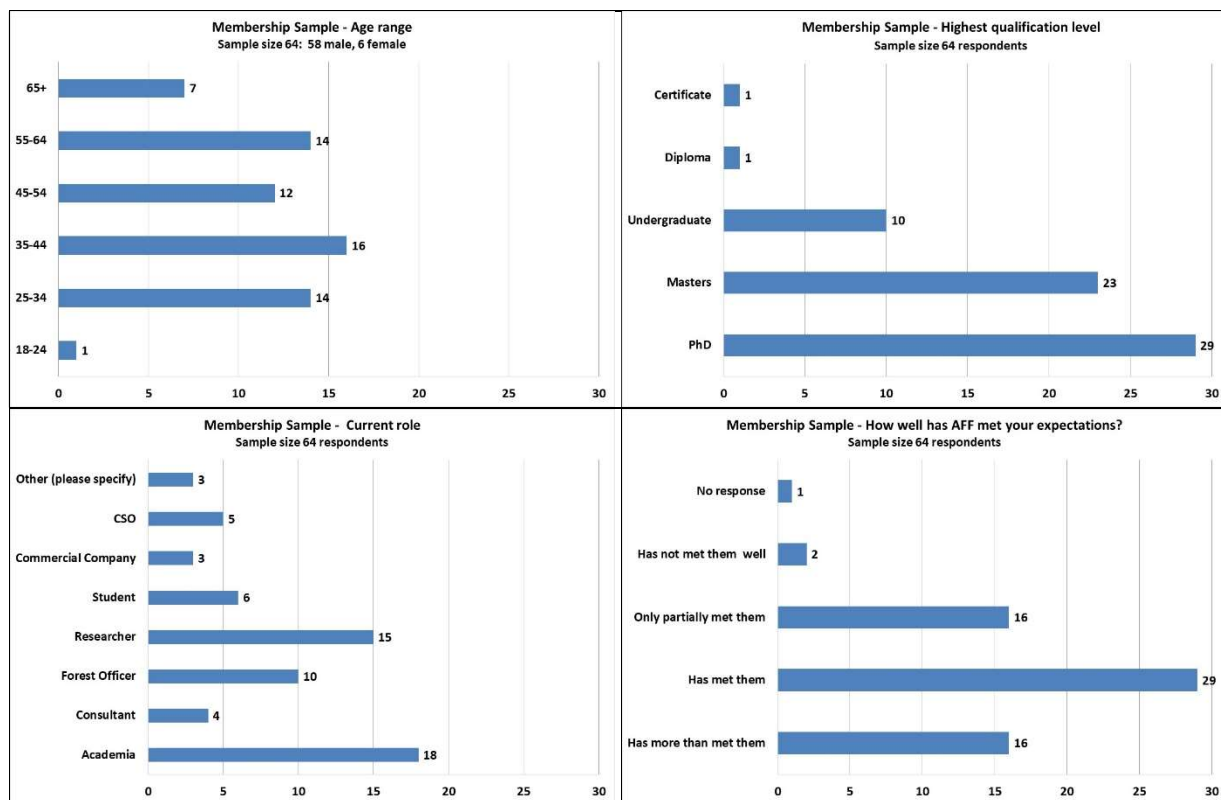
6. Has AFF expanded its links and collaboration with regional organisations? Strengthened its links with governments, such as with MOUs? Strengthened cooperation with other or new initiatives?
7. Has capacity of entrepreneurs in gums and resins, including women and youth, to develop bankable projects in selected countries (Kenya, Republic of Sudan, Niger, Burkina Faso) been strengthened?
8. Has African countries' capacity to develop their second NDC enhanced or is currently being enhanced?
9. Has African countries' capacity to intervene in relevant global negotiations improved?
10. Have understanding and use of the M&E tools by AFF members been enhanced?

AFF has been successful in meeting the needs of its membership, as noted above, and is working to increase the diversity of its beneficiaries, such as through the Community of Practice on women, forestry, and climate change, and its members' capacity in developing project proposals, such as through its webinar on Developing Bankable Projects. Here we go into some detail on our findings on these questions, including from our survey of members, observations of AFF training webinars and Members' Forum, and review of AFF publications.

Summary of Results from the Questionnaire to AFF members

Below are responses to a questionnaire, sent to all AFF members via email/Survey Monkey, on level of satisfaction with AFF. There were 64 responses, predominantly from people in academia and research. Most were generally satisfied with what AFF was doing for them but it was a little disappointing to see very few suggestions made on how AFF could and should improve going forward; the majority simply want it to continue along its traditional path. See Annex 4 for the full survey results.





2.2.3 Review of training events based on observations by the evaluators and questionnaire responses by participants

Evaluation team members observed two training events hosted by AFF and followed these up with questionnaires to the attendees of each seeking their views on what they had participated in. This section addresses each event in turn, first providing information and thoughts based on the team's observations and then looking into questionnaire respondents' views on the event they attended.

Webinar: Community of Practice (CoP) on 'advancing women in forestry in the context of climate change'

This webinar took place over two weeks (ten days) from 11-22 July 2022, for three hours per day. One member of the evaluation team was able to sit in on it on 13-15 July and then 18-19 July. Two weeks is a long time, but it perhaps allowed more people to join in on at least part of it, rather than having fewer, but longer, days. This was probably a good decision for getting the main message of the webinar across to as many people as possible.

Roughly 80 people attended the webinar, including both women and men from at least 18 countries in Eastern, Western, Central, and Southern Africa. The programme consisted of speakers from organisations in various African countries, including a presentation from AFF itself on one day. Ample time was always given for questions and answers, and frequently questions were posed by the presenter for the participants to ponder and comment on. It was thus highly participatory and the information presented and the interaction among the participants and speakers were of exceptional quality, in our view.

The programme was focused specifically on women in forests: each day a speaker, or two speakers, introduced various aspects of the subject of gender, forest and climate change (also youth one day),

moving into discussions during the second week on specific questions geared ultimately toward encouraging the participants to take the information imparted forward into action, such as:

- ‘What can you do at an individual level to mitigate climate change?’
- ‘What have you already done on climate change mitigation or adaptation?’
- ‘What tools or resources can we give to women or other groups to help them with adaptation?’
- ‘What can/should men do for their wives and daughters, at the household level?’
- ‘What are we not doing right? Why do we still have bad policies?’

This programme of presentations and discussions were followed by a training on the penultimate day of the event on how to sensitise people on gender issues and mainstream women in forestry for climate change, followed by a similar training for French speakers on the final day. AFF Executive Secretary Godwin Kowero, who attended much of the event himself, confirmed that this was one of the first series of CoPs organised by AFF since during 2021, AFF had also organised two CoPs on NDCs and NTFPs so it sounds as though similar events are intended in the future.

There were numerous impressive aspects of the CoP:

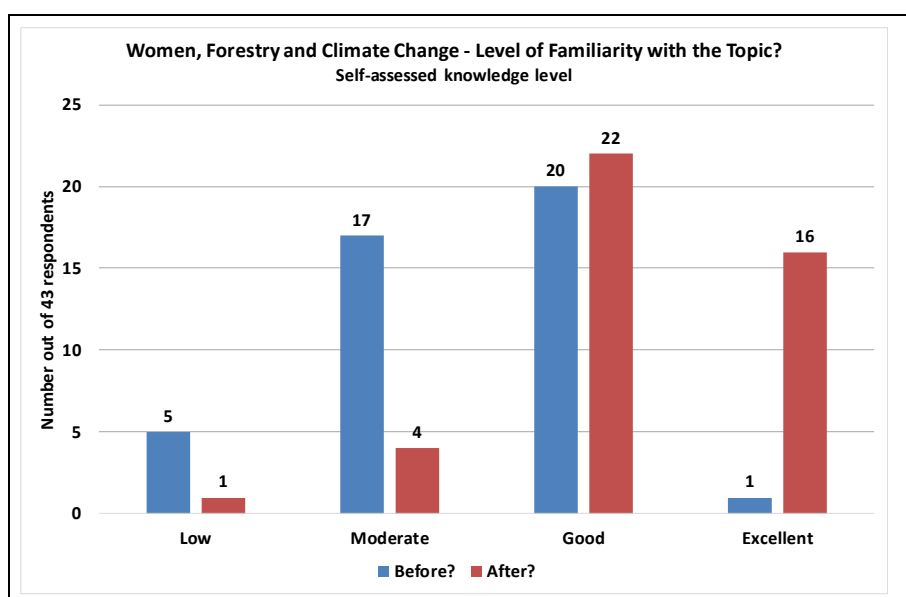
- The moderation was excellent, both in making participants feel welcome, introducing the day’s presentation topic and speaker, and eliciting questions and comments. At several points during the two weeks the moderator had to take over when a presenter had connectivity problems and this was handled with ease and expertise. The moderator also read out all comments typed into the chat box in almost real time, to make sure all the questions and comments were heard, and answered where needed..
- The atmosphere was positive, very warm and appreciative. This was all the more remarkable given that many participants could not see each other on the Zoom screen and did not have the opportunities for informal interactions and networking that they would have had if the CoP had taken place in person, such as during coffee breaks. On the other hand, holding it as a webinar also enabled people from many countries to participate, which has great value.
- There were numerous men in attendance, including Godwin Kowero himself, who participated often and came in with excellent insights when solicited. It is notable that there seemed to be a generally positive attitude amongst participants towards focusing on gender in this specific area of forests and climate change. Participants were generally receptive to the idea that enabling women to participate more fully in decision-making and policy-making, and ensuring that they have on the ground skills for implementation, benefits society generally, not just women, because:
 - ⇒ Women may feel the effects of climate change first as they tend to be more tied to the land so they have to be a part of the solution and they have relevant knowledge and expertise, which are needed;
 - ⇒ Women are more likely to share information with the community and other women; and
 - ⇒ Everyone needs resilience to climate change.

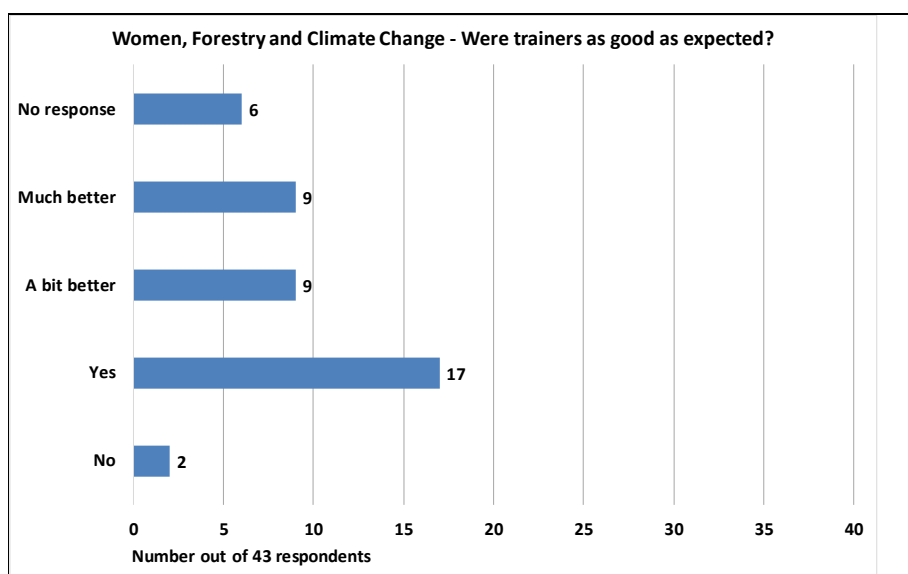
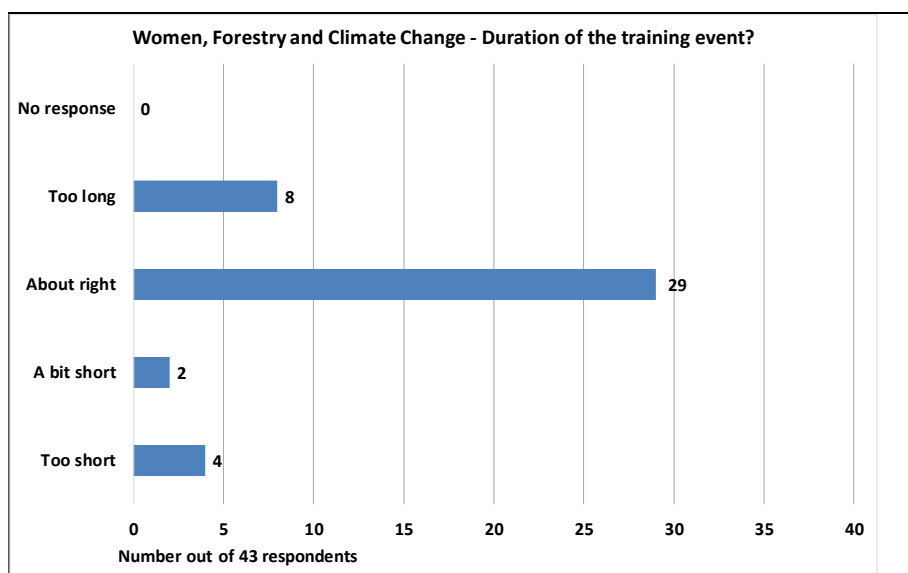
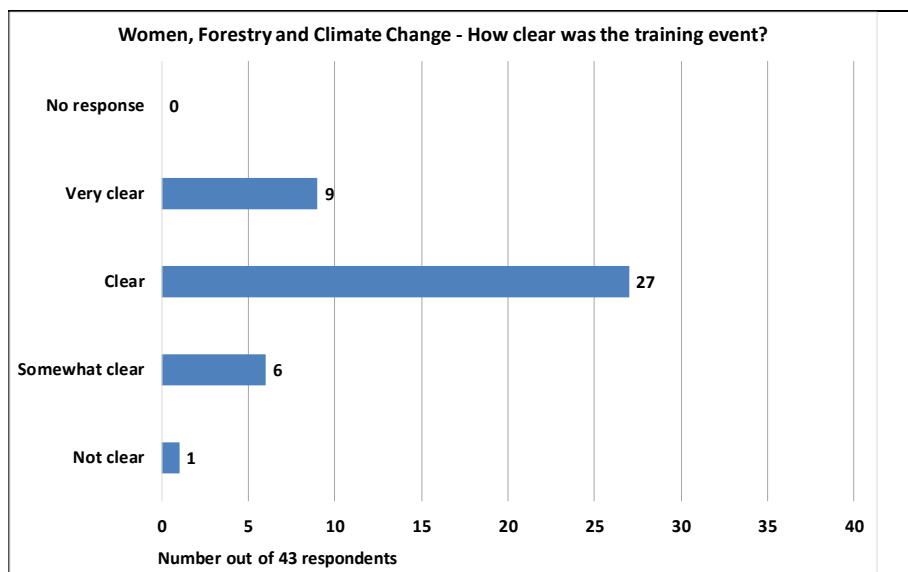
At one point, a male participant objected to discriminating in favour of women over men, saying both are needed equally. Doris Mutta of AFF handled this question with aplomb, agreeing with the questioner that both should contribute equally, so if men outnumber women it is appropriate to make efforts to bring women in specifically. She then noted that talking together and working in partnership are necessary for addressing these kinds of differences of opinion. This seemed to be a convincing argument, particularly in conjunction with the oft-cited statement that bringing in women and enhancing their role is to everyone’s benefit rather than a cause for conflict.

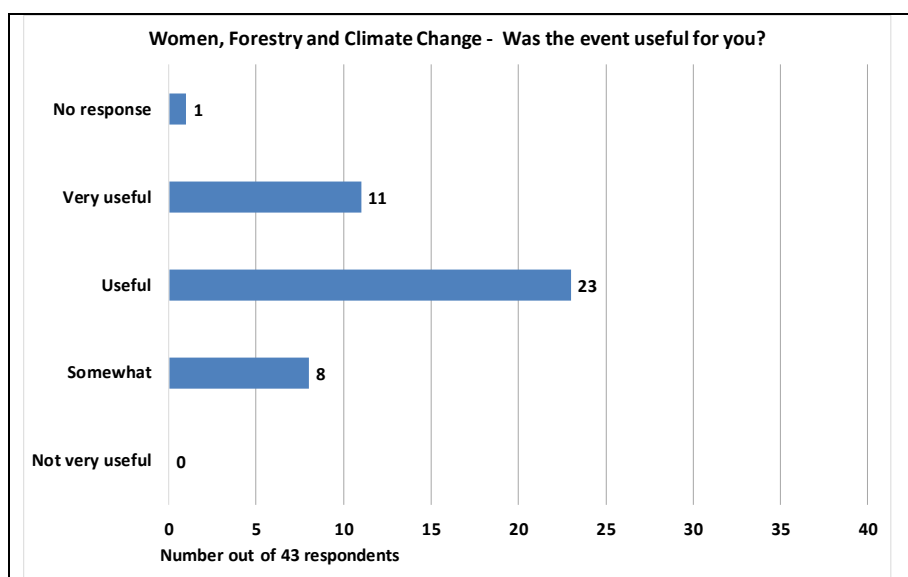
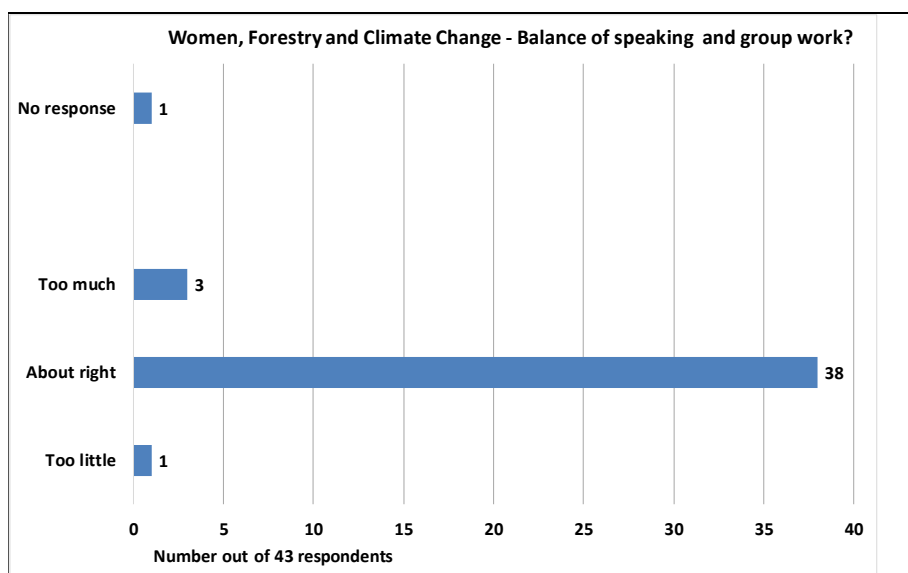
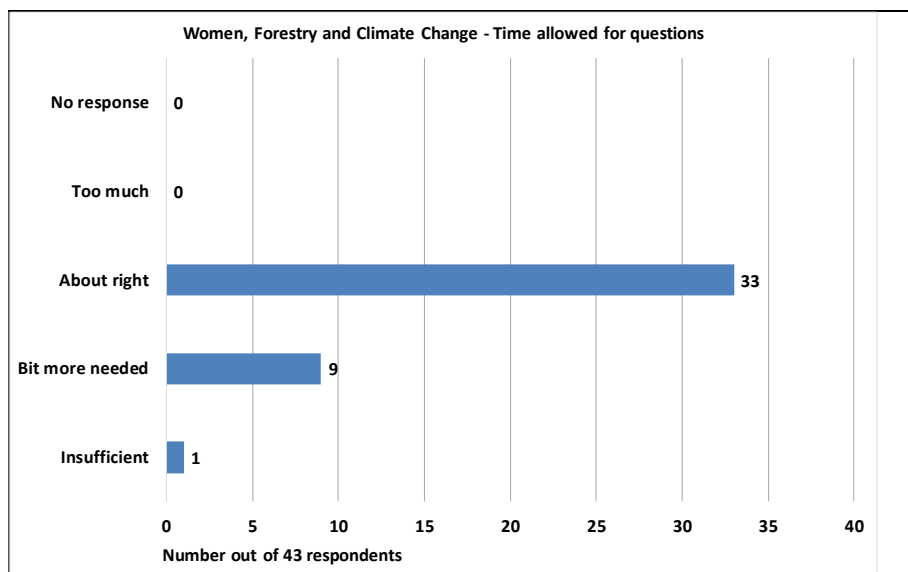
There were also issues that might benefit from more attention:

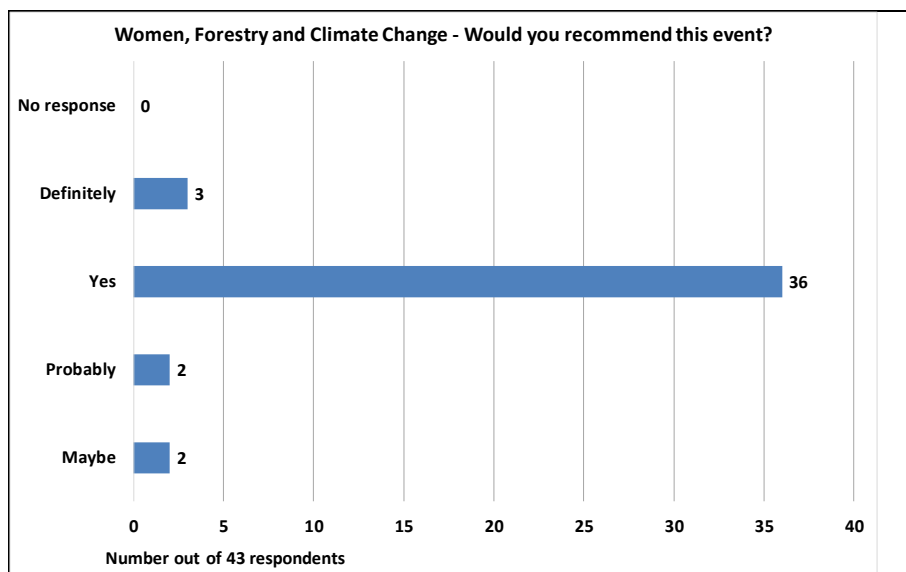
- There were francophones participating and writing comments in French in the chat box but the moderators/presenters had to depend on other participants to interpret or translate what they said. One participant requested that AFF organise another webinar specifically for francophones. Catering more to francophones might well assist AFF in its aim to expand its activities and support to West Africa/francophone Africa, but it might be better to be able to cater to both anglophones and francophones within the same event through simultaneous interpretation, if resources allow, particularly if participants come from both anglophone and francophone countries as with this type of web-based event. It might also be less expensive to have simultaneous interpretation than to hold separate events in francophone countries.
- Also with regard to effectiveness of communication, the slides were excellent, and they were read verbatim, which surely helped non-native English speakers' understanding. One participant, however, said there are also people in rural areas—women especially—who do not speak English but only native languages. The point being made was that academic or technical language in AFF publications needs to be toned down for many people, but our opinion is that this webinar hit the right level for the people who were participating in it.
- AFF has now confirmed that participation in these events is not limited to members only and indeed some recent webinars have been largely non-members. There are few limits on the number for virtual events but limits do apply to physical event.
- At present, AFF has difficulty finding interpreters between French and English who are familiar with technical terms and prefers to hold repeat events in each language. This is likely to change in the future if good interpreters can be located and retained

The figures below summarise the responses to a questionnaire from the evaluation team from 43 attendees including 24 women and 19 men. They suggest that the event was by and large well-received by the participants. The first figure illustrates the self-assessed view of participants' knowledge level before and after the event; the subsequent figures indicate a high level of satisfaction with the structure and delivery of the event.







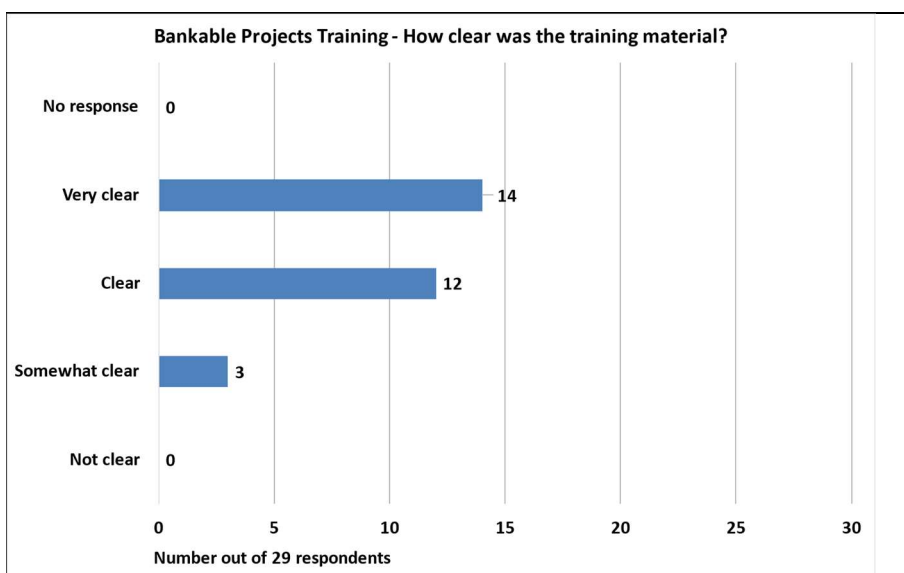
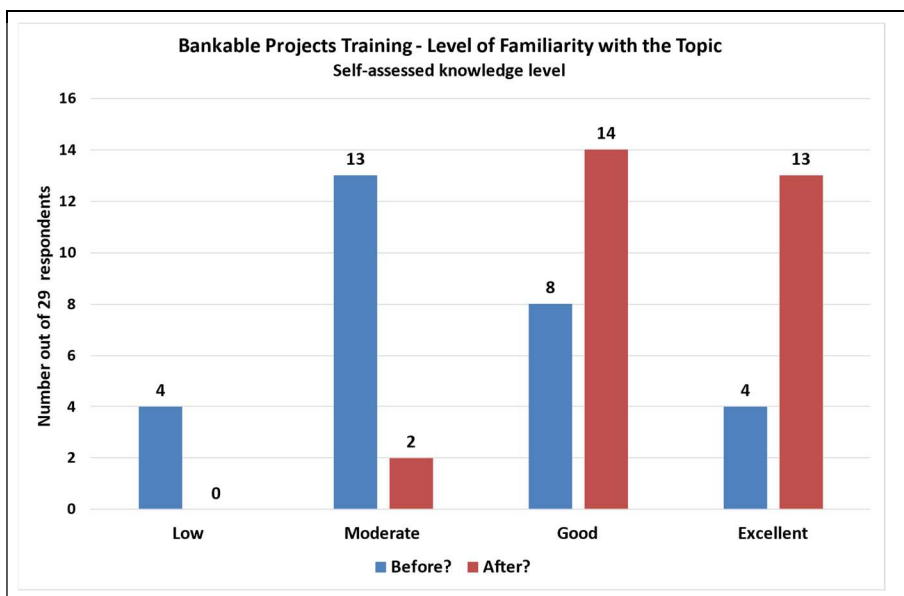


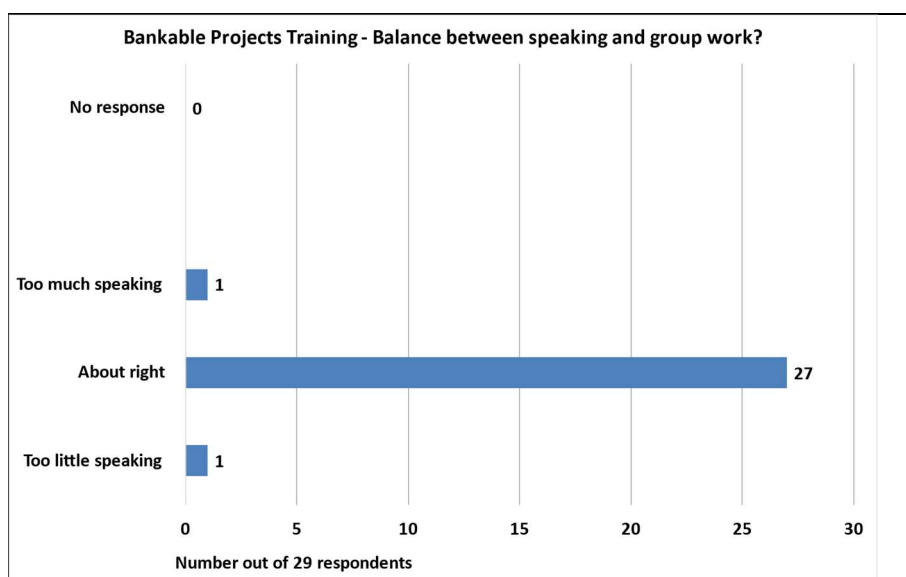
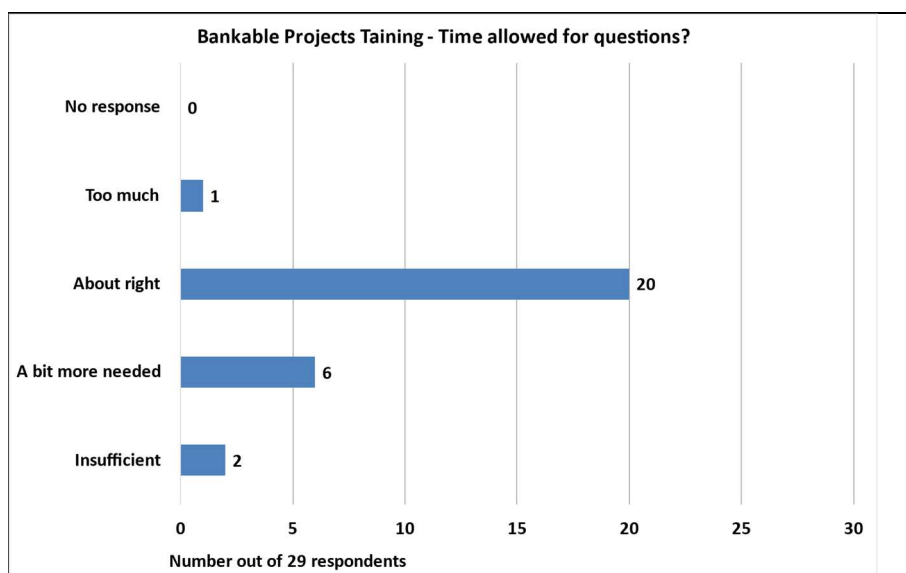
Hybrid training event on Bankable Projects for accessing climate change funding

This event, held from 13-15 July 2022, was both in-person, with the physical event held in Nairobi, and virtual, with numerous others attending online from other regions of Africa with around 50 attendees in most sessions. There were 29 respondents to the questionnaire sent afterwards on this event: 25 men and 4 women. Of these respondents, 12 had attended physically and 17 virtually. There were issues with audibility, especially from the floor of the physical event, and one of the speakers did not adapt well to having a virtual audience as well as a physical one; a clip-on microphone would have helped. Some virtual participants found great difficulty in engaging with the group work and discussions.

Most attendees felt they had gained knowledge but there appears to be need to tighten up the way in which hybrid events are prepared for, managed and followed up if everyone is to gain maximum value from them. It seems likely that virtual events will become the main modality for these events as they are cheaper to run but protocols need to be developed and the trainers and speakers coached in their use to optimise the value to all.

The figures below summarise the responses to a questionnaire put together by the evaluation team. The questionnaire received 29 responses that taken together suggest the event was on the whole well received by the participants.







2.2.4 Review of Publications

AFF has a wide variety of written materials available on its website, including technical reports, working papers, training modules, compendia, policy briefs, fact sheets, other reports, journal articles, books and monographs, newsletters, and proceedings. Its website also links to close to 30 forest databases, 30 climate change databases, 11 databases on related topics, and over 40 journals, all open access. The team reviewed a number of publications of different types. We found that most have a useful abstract on the AFF website, with a link to the full document or publication, although we had some difficulty accessing some documents and reports and had to request these from the Secretariat, who readily provided them.

Overall, the evaluation team was generally positively impressed with the number and quality of the written materials reviewed. The differences in quality that have been discerned can mainly, we think, be attributed to the subject matter and the degree to which the experience and expertise of AFF staff and consultants in technical forestry is relevant and put to use. In subjects that have more recently come into the view of AFF, the technical expertise and experience among the experts that AFF has traditionally contracted to carry out studies of interest is sometimes not as relevant, and this shows

to some extent in the materials reviewed, on, for instance, some of the materials on multilateral organisations and processes, negotiating skills, and forest-related mitigation and adaptation processes to tackle the climate crisis.

Box 1 Review of material on multilateral processes

With regard to the materials provided to us on this subject, we reviewed in detail the following:

- *African participation in international forest processes. Policy Brief No.1 2004 [sic]* (Ruhombe, J., Taal, B. M. & Persson, R., 2005)
- *Training module on effective engagement of African delegates in international multilateral processes* (Oteng-Yeboah A. A., 2016);
- *Enhancement of African national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global change policies and initiatives* (FOKABS, 2020);
- *Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global change policies and initiatives in Eastern and Southern Africa* (Dlamini, C. 2020), and
- (Twelve) reports on training symposia in eleven countries in 2021 on *Understanding and Mainstreaming into National Forestry Policies, Plans and Actions of Decisions from Global and Regional Climate Change Related Processes* (Oteng-Yeboah, A.A. et al., 2021).

(Please refer to the individual reviews of these in 0.)

While none of the materials seen are perfect, in that there are usually numerous superficial issues with formatting, missing words, misspelled words, references lacking, etc., most of the technical forestry materials could easily be raised to a higher professional standard simply with thorough proofreading as the final step before publication. The materials on the newer topics, however, sometimes have more difficult issues to address.

For instance, the 2016 Training Module on multilateral negotiation skills was written by someone whose main experience, while of course deserving of the highest respect, appears to be overwhelmingly in chairing negotiating sessions, not in leading negotiating teams. This shows in the fact that there is very little if anything said about the aim of negotiators themselves to achieve what they or the country they represent want. The author's dominant theme was the necessity of achieving compromise and agreement; the dominant concern of negotiators is to get as much of what they want within that agreement, in competition with other negotiators whose interests ' conflict with their own, thus creating the need for negotiations in the first place. We were very pleased to see that the 2021 reports on training on Global and Regional Climate Change-Related Processes included negotiation simulations that addressed this need more than sufficiently, but for individuals who were unable to access those training sessions the only AFF information available on the specific topic of negotiating is the 2016 Training Module.

Our recommendation in this area is that AFF should not limit itself to known consultants and experts but broaden the pool of bids in order to obtain the highest level of expertise possible on these subjects in which AFF is not as experienced. For instance, instead of hiring foresters, consider contracting people from different fields or disciplines who may have more relevant experience in these newer areas such as climate change or negotiating skills. It appears that this was done to some extent for the 2021 training sessions on global and regional climate change-related processes but even more expertise in negotiating itself would not go amiss. It is recognised that outside expertise would be more expensive and members usually work at well-below market rates and return some of their fees to AFF.

2.2.5 *Membership and links with other organisations*

With regard to strengthening links with other organisations and other levels, this has only been done to a limited extent. Good links have been built with UNFF and with the AU, with AUC being represented on the Governing Council. But, while contact has been made with regional organisations such as ECOWAS, EAC and SADC, this remains quite limited. AFF has contact with organisations such as COMIFAC, CBFF and CAFI and is a partner in the Great Green Wall of Africa. There is therefore awareness of AFF, what it does and what it could do but these links have not resulted in specific assignments, beyond the SDC and Sida supported activities, being offered to AFF to any great extent.

The issue of strengthening links and cooperation relates somewhat to the question of AFF transitioning from being a purely donor-funded programme to one with a range of sources of finance that could include some from donors. However, neither logframe actually tackles the need for AFF to find further funding at the end of their respective support periods (see under Sustainability and Risks below for more on this).

AFF has an agreement with NGARA to undertake various tasks together. In terms of MoUs, there are 15 with African universities, two international universities in Sweden (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) and Switzerland (Bern University), plus others including the Great Green Wall Secretariat, CILLS, ICRAF, KEFRI, and the parent ministry in Kenya. This will need to be reviewed and updated as needed.

The question of whether the current membership structure of AFF is still adequate and appropriate does not appear to have been considered and did not come up in any of the interviews carried out or in more general discussions. As far as we are aware, it is not a question that appears to have been given much consideration. We have reviewed the Constitution and, given that many AFF resources have been made available on open access, feel that the whole question of membership needs to be reviewed. This is discussed in detail in Section 3.2.1 below.

2.3 *Efficiency*

As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, AFF has underspent its budget in 2020 and 2021, hence the no-cost extension of the support period by both donors. Financial control and auditing as part of the bought-in services from ICRAF have been of a high standard and expenditure has almost always been below the budgeted amount.

The overarching question relating to efficiency is whether the approach adopted, of two separate but partially overlapping projects funded by different donors has helped or hindered AFF and whether a single project within which the two donors pooled their funding would have been more efficient. The specific evaluation questions for efficiency are as follows:

Costs

1. Is the two-layered programme approach (SDC and Sida-funded programme, and overarching AFF programme) efficient?
2. Is the membership and network approach of AFF efficient for the achievement of set objectives (of the SDC/Sida-funded programmes? the AFF programme)?
3. Was the programme implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?
4. Are the approach and work modalities efficient with regard to the costs or are there more cost-effective ways to achieve the results?

Transparency and accountability

5. Is there adequate collaboration and regular reporting in place?

Maximising synergies

6. To what extent are there overlaps, complementarities and/or synergies which may have positively or negatively influenced achievements?

2.3.1 Separate projects or a combined one?

While it may have made administration more straightforward for the donors, it has left AFF with the task of running two parallel and overlapping administrative systems with an administrative structure that is more complicated than it needs to be as some positions are funded fully by one donor and others are shared between both. There are also two logical frameworks and two sets of reporting required.

The logical frameworks for both projects are very long and complex, with a great deal of detail. Both are more complex than the logical frameworks used by other donors in our experience, with indicators for activities, for example, when normal practice is to show only the inputs required for each activity in the logframe. The length and complexity of both logical frameworks seems to us be unnecessary and to border on being overly prescriptive but we accept that the structure may be an internal requirement laid on both donors.

The SDC logical framework lists types of input, but not the detail nor costs. The Sida logframe does not specify activities or inputs at all. The indicators and means of verification are only broadly expressed in the SDC logframe. The Sida logical framework goes into great detail with targets for each output and does specify that both quantitative and qualitative information is required but does not give details of how the latter should be done.

While both donors have specific interests that they are anxious to see reflected, it would be more efficient to express these in a general requirement rather than re-expressing them within the logical framework. In both cases, a much more succinct logical framework, with a narrative giving specific guidance, may have been much easier for AFF to follow.

Table 1 below summarises the objectives from the two projects. It has been ordered to put similar objectives from each on the same row in the table. While the wording in the two logical framework objectives on the same topic is not identical, in most cases it is sufficiently similar to be easily combined into a single one. It is understood that this was considered but, unfortunately, the differing approaches proved too hard to bridge at the time this was discussed.

In essence, while SDC preferred a more generic framework, Sida preferred to have greater clarity on specific approaches for AFF to follow, to reflect more clearly their wider development policy, strategy and specific interests. Notwithstanding this important difference of approach, the present evaluators feel that using pooled funding and a single logical framework would certainly have been more efficient for AFF to run than the two-project structure that emerged.

Table 1 SDC and Sida objectives from their logical frameworks

SDC	Sida
Objective 1. To strengthen capacity of African forestry stakeholders in adopting best practices that integrate both adaptation and mitigation options in response to the impacts of climate change and variability to biophysical and social systems in different landscapes	Objective 2: To improve knowledge and capacities of African stakeholders in responding to adverse effects of climate change through better management and use of forest ecosystems and trees outside forests
Objective 2. To enhance national forest governance by strengthening the capacity of African stakeholders to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives related to forestry	Objective 4: To enhance national forest governance by strengthening African capacity to effectively participate in multilateral environmental processes and mainstream and implement decisions from them into their national policies and activities
Objective 3. To promote entrepreneurship opportunities and technologically efficient means for value addition in African forestry, including those related to climate change that enhance livelihoods, national incomes and employment	Objective 1. To identify and promote opportunities for protecting and sustainably managing the forest resource base to enhance supply of ecosystem goods and services Objective 3: To examine the potential for production and use of liquid biofuels in Africa as a means towards developing green and circular national economies
Objective 4. To strengthen AFF's institutional capacity in creation and sharing of relevant forest and tree-based knowledge and information for improved decision making	Objective 5a: To strengthen the capacity of the Knowledge Management and Communication Unit in managing and sharing of information Objective 5b: To strengthen the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) to effectively support AFF activities Objective 5c: To strengthen the Finance and Administration (F&A) Unit for improved management of financial and administrative function Objective 5d: To improve overall governance and oversight on AFF activities

2.3.2 AFF capacity to influence

Both logical frameworks, but especially that from Sida, appear to us to include indicators of achievement that far exceed the capacity of AFF to influence and for which it is effectively impossible to make a clear attribution to actions that AFF has made. This is particularly so in respect of the support given around engagement with climate change issues, national submissions such as NDCs and engagement with REDD+.

For example, under SDC Outcome 2.2 - *African forest stakeholders have better capacity to articulate adaptation, mitigation and REDD+ in their NDCs* – nearly all the indicators for the six outputs are based on what national governments do. While AFF can offer training and improve knowledge, it has no direct influence, let alone control, over how the improved knowledge and skills are used. Furthermore, particularly for NDCs, forests and trees will only be a part of these, with many other sectors also included, all of which will depend on internal discussion at high levels to decide priorities.

Although there is no doubt that improving the capacity and capability of individuals in each country will raise their knowledge level, it is overly optimistic to assume that this will necessarily lead to better NDCs or other engagement at international level. If it does not do so, that is again not a fault that can be laid at the door of AFF, since the matter is beyond their control but AFF materials and skills building could certainly play a valuable role in supporting NDCs in many African countries. AFF's engagement in capacity building with NDC focal points at the country level is a valuable and constructive start in this.

2.3.3 *Making best use of limited funds*

The critical issue here is whether and how AFF's costs could be reduced in order to help it survive now that guaranteed financial support will come to an end. In terms of operations, making more use of national people rather than sending consultants far afield, with the associated travel costs, represents a possible opportunity for finding cost savings. However, although national experts are available, AFF has encountered considerable difficulty in finding people with regional knowledge and expertise on forestry issues. Savings might also be negotiated with regard to the cost of hosting by ICRAF.

As already mentioned, hosting more virtual events will be far less expensive for AFF than in-person events, although interpretation should be provided when participants from different linguistic regions will be attending and this will incur additional costs. Several francophone participants in virtual meetings conducted in English raised this issue. It was possible for them to write chat questions in French and have them answered but their overall benefit from the event was almost certainly much less than it would have been had interpretation been available. For those in-person events that should still take place, it would make sense to use training centres for the events themselves and for accommodation rather than more expensive hotel venues.

2.3.4 *Reporting and accountability*

We have examined the financial and progress reporting by AFF to both donors and this seems to have been timely and appropriately detailed. During COVID-19 restrictions, many planned activities were necessarily delayed but AFF took adequate steps to try and keep functioning although some activities had to be postponed. Plans have been prepared to try and cover outstanding activities in the extended period of time agreed by both donors and these plans look to be appropriate, with sensible decisions made to bring some in-house rather than contracting them out.

2.4 *Impact*

To use a simplified analogy, in marketing of products or services, there are two general approaches used. The first is *Pull marketing*, where the product is advertised to make buyers aware of it and encourage them to buy it, the second is *Push marketing*, where the product is made widely available and this encourages people to buy it. AFF essentially operates the latter approach because, as noted in Section 2.3.2 above, it has little control over how its products and services are used.

Continuing with the same simple marketing analogy, as a supplier of improved knowledge and skills, AFF has to ensure that it is seen as an organisation that reliably delivers high quality knowledge and skills building by developing trust in these as well as being seen as a reliable partner for those who could benefit from its services. As already mentioned in Section 2.2 above, most AFF materials and skills building events are of more than adequate quality; the profile of AFF beyond the 'forestry'

sector is discussed in detail in the next section on Risks and Sustainability since that is increasingly where the bulk of the potentially available funding for AFF in future lies.

The evaluation questions on impact are as follows:

Contribution

1. What are the effects and impacts of the AFF's programmes at network, country and local levels?
2. Are the intended outcomes of AFF being realised overall?
3. What real difference has been made to the beneficiaries? What has been the impact of the AFF's work on livelihoods, sustainable forest management and forest landscape restoration?

Attribution – to AFF

4. What, if any, lasting policy outcomes at regional, national, and/or subnational levels can be linked/attributed to AFF action? Have these been implemented or enforced?
5. Can any institutional or system change (regional, national, subnational) be attributed to the AFF?
6. To what extent has the AFF induced transformational change, either for local partners and beneficiaries, within its own membership-based community, or on boundary partners?
7. What is the impact of AFF knowledge products within its network, on the African continent, and beyond?

Attribution - to SDC / Sida support

8. Can any intended outcomes that are seen be attributed to SDC/Sida support? Have the Swedish and Swiss contributions induced transformative changes to AFF as an organisation / institution and as a network? Or to AFF's boundary partners?

To address impact, we consider it in terms of the three headings above. With regard to contribution, the main finding is that AFF continues to be strongly welcomed and widely appreciated by its members. Despite delays as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the Annual Reports from AFF to the two donors and AFF's plan for use of the unspent funds indicate that the agreed programmes will be completed.

The *Summary report on uptake and impact of AFF resources (2017-2022)* produced by AFF gives details of the wide use made of its published resources and training events and examples of how interviewees made use of them. It is clear that AFF resources are highly appreciated and that at least some people have made use of them to enhance their work. As noted above, although we can draw attention to the use made of the AFF resources, it is impossible for us to determine whether and how this improved the wider aims of livelihoods, sustainable forest management and forest landscape restoration. AFF has provided tools for all these and one may assume that they have been applied but measuring the value of this application is impossible for us to do.

AFF is based around individual membership and its membership is dominated by those in academia, research and government departments. There are some members working in CSOs and the commercial sector but relatively few. This raises a question of whether AFF should also be looking to have influence at field level, for example, in community groups and farmers' organisations, since in many countries these undertake tree planting and make use of natural woodlands. As an international institution, it is very hard for AFF to reach such potential beneficiaries directly but many of its publications and training events, for example, provide a basis from which those in specific countries can undertake skills and knowledge transfer for such groups.

Both CSOs and the private sector are represented on the Governing Council but the level of engagement seems to have further potential to enrich AFF membership and provide new opportunities for the uptake of AFF services and a new revenue stream.

AFF endeavours to make use of its members' expertise and experience as far as possible in undertaking its activities. Interestingly, the evaluation of the first phase of Swiss support made two contradictory statements, identifying, first, 'over-reliance on external expertise to the Secretariat' as a weakness and, then, 'limited availability of high calibre expertise on key issues within the continent' as a threat. We believe strongly in AFF's prioritisation of obtaining expertise from its members where it is able to do so. However, we disagree with the evaluation quoted above and are of the view that AFF has been perhaps too reluctant to go outside its membership when seeking expertise; if there is a need for expertise not among its membership or not available in Africa the Secretariat must be free to consult and engage others.

In other words, AFF appears to have successfully met the 'wants' of its members in terms of what it offers to them but it is less clear that it has met their 'needs' to the same level. For instance, support for forests and trees, especially within the overarching framework of climate change, has brought in a requirement for much wider considerations than in the past. In addition, forests and trees are increasingly viewed globally as one facet of sustainable landscape management.

It is, therefore, essential for those with a focus on forests and trees to also understand, and be able to relate to, other land users and their interaction with forests and trees and to be familiar with forests' position *vis-à-vis* climate change and the other urgent environmental crises. As well as responding to the wants expressed by its members, AFF must get ahead of the curve and ensure that its members are given understanding of wider issues while at the same time building their forestry skills.

With regard to attribution, there are three specific examples that can be mentioned that make attribution of impact to AFF. The African Union Commission (AUC) publication, *The Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa (2020-2030)*, acknowledges AFF for *contributing immensely to the technical production of the Framework*. Within UNFF, the AFF collaborated with the African Union to set up a coordination group for African countries so that their interventions were more coherent than previously and carried greater weight.

This was possible, at least in part, because of the bridge AFF has built between anglophone and francophone Africa. Previously, there was very little contact between these two blocks but the network created by AFF membership appears to have overcome the language barrier and helped both groups see more clearly the commonality in their issues. Finally, the African Development Bank, following its 2018 publication *How Forestry contributes to the African Development Bank's High 5 Priorities: challenges and opportunities*, approached AFF to develop and deliver training on developing Bankable Projects, which was delivered this year.

On transformational change and impact of AFF knowledge products, it is effectively impossible for this evaluation to provide direct evidence. As a membership organisation, AFF has endeavoured to meet the requirements of its members and as far as can be judged from observation, discussion and the feedback on the survey of members, it has been largely successful in this. The survey of members discussed earlier (Section 2.2.2 above on membership and outreach) noted that the majority of respondents to our questionnaire wanted AFF to continue as it had been doing. However, although it is clear that AFF must continue to give attention to this majority view of what its membership wants from it in the future, the evaluators' assessment is that this is not necessarily sufficient for moving forward.

The SDC MSc programme for young African scientists is very attractive to younger members, and several commented that it was something they hoped to benefit from. The programme itself has not been reviewed in detail but informal discussion and engagement with some of the beneficiaries shows that it offers high quality education that will be of substantial value to recipients' home countries on their return.

Interviews with a number of members selected for their exposure to wider issues and the changing landscape, in which forests and trees still have important role but within a much more complex web of interactions than in the past, leads us to a judgment that AFF needs to engage more closely with new paradigms and approaches and guide its members in pushing the boundaries of forestry beyond the established ones, *e.g.*, through solid engagement with sustainable landscape management.

With regard to attribution to SDC and Sida funding, the short answer is that without their support AFF would in all probability have ceased to exist due to lack of finance. Consequently, nearly all that AFF has achieved during the current phases of support has relied on the two donors, notwithstanding that the work was undertaken by AFF. This is not unusual and most similar work in Africa is funded by contributions from donor countries, either directly through bilateral projects or, probably increasingly common, through these countries' contributions to relevant multilateral funding.

The question of whether their support has induced transformative changes is more difficult to answer. We take transformative change to AFF to include its survival post donor funding, as discussed in Section 2.5 below on sustainability. It seems that although both the donors and AFF were cognisant of the fact that this was intended to be the final phase of overall support, this is not reflected adequately in the agreed programmes, which underplayed the complexity and importance of AFF moving to different financing. Consequently, although some progress is now underway, AFF now stands on a cliff edge in terms of finance unless steps are taken to support the transition to the new financing model.

2.4.1 *African interventions in selected forest-related multilateral processes*

As mentioned above, in order to try and ascertain whether donor support through AFF for enhancing African interventions in multilateral processes, we have undertaken a quantitative analysis of African interventions in forest policy-related intergovernmental negotiations. Although this cannot determine the level of influence achieved by African countries, it may serve as a measurable proxy that suggests whether African countries or country groupings have achieved a greater comfort level in making interventions, which may be associated with having more influence. The more interventions made, after all, the greater the odds of having an influence. We have analysed four global intergovernmental processes that affect national, regional and subnational forest policy: UNFCCC, IPCC (on impacts and mitigation in particular), UNFF, and FAO's COFO.

It should be noted that there are huge limitations to this study, including the fact that we have not analysed the CBD nor the UNCCD due to time constraints. A significant obstacle for those we have analysed is that official reports of the meetings studied frequently do not attribute actions to specific countries' interventions, nor usually even identify specific countries. We have therefore used *Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB)* reports because the main purpose of *ENB* is to create a record of the politics involved—the actual negotiations themselves—rather than simply the outcome. Another limitation, however, is variance in the level of detail with which *ENB* reports on the various processes we have examined. For the UNFCCC and the UNFF, *ENB* publishes daily bulletins; for the others it does not, so *ENB* summary reports have been used for IPCC and COFO.

We have also not analysed all reports from every year of SDC/Sida support to AFF, again due to time constraints. Instead, we have taken a representative sample from three different periods: the period prior to SDC/Sida funding, the medium-term between 2014 and 2018, and then the most recent sessions of each of the four processes under analysis.

We have not focused on the same years for each process, for several reasons. In the case of COFO there is no data available between 2010-2020. In the case of the others, we have focused on meetings at which major decisions were being made about future commitments. For example, we started with the 1997 UNFCCC COP 3 at which the Kyoto Protocol came into being, also analysing 2005 COP 10, which began the Bali process toward REDD+, the 2007 COP 12 at which REDD+ was finalised, 2015's COP 21 at which the Paris Agreement was finalised, and then the most recent COP, COP 26 in 2021, which, *inter alia*, produced the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

We have not limited the count of interventions only to those specific to forests, however, one reason being that the *ENB* is known to severely limit what it reports due to space limits, so it is really not possible to know whether an intervention may have included something about forests even when that is not explicit, nor is it necessarily possible to judge every intervention as to whether it may implicitly address forests in some way. Again, time constraints limiting capacity to consider the content of every intervention meant that a simple quantitative count of interventions was necessary. It is also emphasised that this analysis will not have captured changes from training given in October 2021 as this will not have had time to take effect.

For the analysis, we selected a sample of five countries in which AFF has members, to get a variety of countries in terms of size (big or small), language (anglophone or francophone), and humidity of forest (dry or wet). We also looked for interventions from relevant country groupings for each process—a grouping in which at least one of the selected countries in our sample is active, which made at least one intervention in any of the selected sessions of that process. The groupings that have been active vary considerably across the processes.³

As will be seen in the following tables, the results are mixed. Reading from bottom up:

- *COFO*: Given the lack of data during the medium term, the difference between interventions at the beginning of *ENB* coverage of COFO and the most recent COFO session looks very stark, with interventions from the selected sample increasing more than fivefold between 2010 and 2022.
- *UNFF*: UNFF is anomalous, in that interventions from the selected sample in 2005 and 2007 were more than threefold and sevenfold higher, respectively, than the highest number as recorded in *ENB*, including *ENB* daily bulletins, in any of the other years recorded. For UNFF it was also possible to use the UNFF Secretariat's (UNFFS) report of the session to count interventions, so we did this as a way of attempting to corroborate the anomalous results for 2007. As will be seen, for most years reported for UNFF, the *ENB* and UNFFS are very similar, while for 2007 they are not. Given that *ENB* reports are more detailed on the politics involved than the UNFFS reports this should be taken to mean that the UNFFS report did not capture all of the interventions because they were not as relevant to the outcomes being reported.
- For *IPCC*, we limited our analysis to the process of negotiating the Summaries for Policymakers (SPMs) of Working Groups II (on impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability) and Working Group III (on mitigation of climate change) for Assessment Report 4 (AR4) in 2007; AR5 in 2013-14; and

³ The only exception to that rule is the inclusion of interventions from the African Women's Network for Community, an NGO, at three UNFF sessions. There were no other NGO interventions specific to the African region reported for any of the processes.

AR6 (2021-22). One reason for these limits was that data was not available for AR4 WGI; another was that WGI covers the Physical Science Basis, which includes very little if any discussion on forests, unlike the WGII and WGIII SPMs. We did, however, include interventions made during the approval of the SPM for the 2018 Special Report on Climate Change and Land, as this Report has very much to do with forests in the context of all land uses. Here again, the results are somewhat mixed, with a high of 30 results during the AR5 WGII approval session, after very low numbers (4 and 2) for the two approval sessions recorded for AR4 in 2007. The second highest number of interventions, 24, was hit at the most recent approval session, however, that of AR6 WGIII in 2022.

- *UNFCCC*: This process shows most clearly a steady, unwavering increase in numbers of interventions by the selected sample, from 10 in 1997 to 47 in 2021. Again, these have not been limited to interventions on forests, *per se*. Furthermore, the number of interventions counted was already high, at 32, in 2007, before SDC/Sida support to AFF started, only four below the number counted in 2015.

The results of our analysis may not show any influence by AFF whatsoever, given the limitations of the study and the mixture of results seen. However, AFF's influence may perhaps be conjectured, as it is certain that, apart from within UNFF—which may have benefitted at specific times in its history from the efforts made by AFF, Peter Gondo, and the AU (see elsewhere in this report)—African interventions have in any case not decreased, or decreased significantly, in any of these fora.

According to the AFF Executive Director, the AFF technical support team works through the African Group in UNFF and UNCCD to help prepare the African delegates before the meetings. The group develops resolutions on the agenda items which are intended to guide the representative of the African Group when making interventions during the meetings on behalf of the group. He stated that the recent AFF collaboration with the AUC and the UNCCD Secretariat to support African delegates preparing for COP15 of UNCCD was valuable in generating consensus among African negotiators and providing a unified African voice during the deliberations.

	Representative sample (alphabetical order) plus relevant country groupings	Numbers of interventions over time from African delegates from selected countries/groupings								
		Pre-Sida and SDC funding			Post-Sida and SDC funding			Most recent		
UNFCCC (forest-related, REDD+)		1997 COP 3	2005 COP 10 (introduction of RED concept)	2007 COP 12 (finalization of REDD+)			2015 COP 21 (Paris Agreement)		2021 COP 26	
	Burkina Faso	2	1	0			1		0	
	Cameroon	0	2	1			2		0	
	Ghana	2	3	5 (2 for G77)			1		0	
	Kenya	4	1	2			1		2	
	Tanzania	(2, for G77)	2	11 (2 for G77)			0		1	
	AG/African States (with any spokescountries from the five)	0	3 (incl Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania)	10 (incl Ghana)			20 (incl Ghana)		22	
	LDCs/LEG (Burkina Faso, Tanzania)	0	6	5			10		20	
	Coalition for Rainforest Nations (Ghana)	--	0	0			1		2	
Totals in these samples:		10	18	32			36		47	
IPCC AR4, AR5 AND AR6 approval sessions: WGII on impacts and WGIII on mitigation			2007 AR4 WGII	2007 AR4 WGIII	2014 AR5 WGII	2014 AR5 WGIII		2018 SRCCL approval	2022 AR6 WGII	2022 AR6 WGIII
	Burkina Faso		0	0	0	0		0	0	0
	Cameroon		0	0	0	0		0	0	0
	Ghana		4	0	8	0		1	0	0
	Kenya		0	2	5	0		2	2	11
	Tanzania		0	0	17	10		8	5	12
	AG/African States (with any spokescountries from the five)		0	0	0	0		0	0	0
	LDCs (Burkina Faso, Tanzania)		0	0	0	1		1	0	2
Totals in these samples:			4	2	30	11		12	7	24

UNFF	2005 UNFF5 (failed NLBI negotiation)	2007 UNFF-7 (finalization of NLBI)		2015 UNFF-11 (resolution on IAF beyond 2015)		2017 UNFF-12 (finalization of the UNSPF 2017-2030)		2022 UNFF-17	
	<i>ENB (dailies)</i>	<i>ENB (dailies)</i>	<i>UNFFS report of the session</i>	<i>ENB (dailies)</i>	<i>UNFFS report of the session</i>	<i>ENB (dailies)</i>	<i>UNFFS report of the session</i>	<i>ENB dailies</i>	<i>UNFFS report of the session</i>
<i>from ENB and UNFFS reports:</i>									
Burkina Faso	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cameroon	0	0	0	3	3	1	2	1	2
Ghana	1	0	0	3	2	2	1	3	4
Kenya	6	0	0	1	1	1	0	1+	2
Tanzania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
AG/African States (with any spokescountries from the five)	25 (incl 2 Ghana)	73	0	0	1	4	5	0	0
LDCs (Burkina Faso, Tanzania)	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
COMIFAC (Cameroon)	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2
African Wildlife and Forestry Commission	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congo Basin Forest Partnership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
African Union	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
African Forest Forum	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (all 5 countries)	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0
FORNESSA (based in Ghana)	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals in these samples:	34	75	4	12	10	10	10	7	10
FAO COFO		2009 COFO-18	2010 COFO-19	(no data between 2010-2020)					2022 COFO-26
Burkina Faso		2	0						0
Cameroon		0	0						9
Ghana		0	2						0
Kenya		0	0						5
Tanzania		4	4						1
AG/African States (with any spokescountries from the five)		0	0						10 (incl Kenya, Cameroon)
LDCs (Burkina Faso, Tanzania)		0	0						0
COMIFAC		0	0						0
Totals in these samples:		6	6						25

2.5 Risks and sustainability

During a review of closed projects in Indonesia and Sabah for the UK Darwin Initiative in 2007, a simple classification for different types of project was developed, which has subsequently been more widely used in other assignments and has proved helpful. The three types identified were: *discrete* – for ‘one-off’ projects fully completed during the project period; *stepwise* - reaching a stable end point but with great potential for further activities; and *contiguous* - needing follow-on support immediately after the project ends to avoid catastrophic loss of what had been achieved.

Contiguous projects are by definition not going to reach a stable end point and must immediately and continually obtain follow-on funding for survival. Such projects carry a high risk, given that if funding ceases most or all the gains may be lost. In this case, unlike a project with a finite end, the institution created here must be able to sustain itself into an indefinite future, which necessitates an ongoing stream of funding.

2.5.1 The current situation

AFF is clearly a contiguous project in that it followed on immediately from the two earlier phases and did not have significant resources to continue without the funding provided by the two projects that are the subject of this evaluation. Review of both projects’ documentation and reporting suggests a lack of attention to the matter of future funding for AFF once the current project phases end. Both projects’ initial project documents suggest that the donors planned this to be the final phase of their support but the actions expected of AFF, as the delivery agent of both projects, in planning for what would happen after this ended has not been made sufficiently explicit in the documentation available to the evaluation team.

Given the importance of securing alternative funding sources, it is not clear why this aspect has not been given more attention by SDC, Sida or AFF. There should have been a clear output with activities, milestones and indicators specified and agreed in the logframes, yet neither of the two logframes has a specific output and associated activities for assuring funding into the future.

With regard to Sida, the project document for the current phase summarises AFF’s *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* in its Section 10.2 on Financial Sustainability but gives no specific requirement, target or milestone to be achieved on this. Section 10.3 on Sustainability of products of intervention correctly notes that AFF products are widely used and highly valued by its members (and, because nearly all AFF resources are open access, by other stakeholders) but appears to assume that AFF’s fund raising strategy and plan will have succeeded by the end of the current support. Although the risk matrix in Section 10.3 rightly notes the risk of sustainability of funding as having major consequence, it classifies the likelihood of its occurrence as unlikely giving a risk category of medium. This severely underplays the risk and Component 5 – Strengthening AFF as an institution of the project – should have included a specific outcome and activities on securing new funding streams.

The SDC project document has a little more detail on the matter of future funding, stating on page 5:

Time frame of the overall intervention: The envisaged overall time frame of the contribution is until 2021 when the period for this grant expires. *However, during this period efforts will be made to ensure long-term sustainability of the outcomes and impacts of these interventions, as well as the sustainability of AFF as an institution.* [Authors' italics for emphasis.]

The logical framework for SDC support does not identify any specific actions that relate to this nor are there any milestones as targets. AFF's Annual Report for 2020 to SDC mentions strengthening of its engagement with members and various events attended to raise AFF's profile under Objective 4 – Strengthening AFF's institutional capacity – but does not mention searching for funds from new sources. The 2021 Annual Report is similar but includes a list of five initiatives developed under the heading of AFF sustainability strategy:

- The first, on NTFP value chains, was submitted to Germany's International Climate Initiative but was not selected;
- A second proposal including AFF was submitted to the AfDB African Climate Change Fund on Women and Youth Led NTFP Enterprises but did not pass the first evaluation;
- The third proposal, in collaboration with UNESCO, was on Ecosystem-based adaptation approaches and public-private partnership (PPP) for managing biosphere reserves but does not appear to have been accepted;
- The fourth initiative mentioned simply reiterated that the AFF Task Force for Resource Mobilisation was considering other, unspecified, initiatives; and
- The fifth one noted is training on building capacity to prepare bankable projects addressing issues related to forests and climate change, which was delivered in June 2022.

2.5.2 Funding Needs

The 2021 version of AFF's *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* identifies the general requirement to diversify its sources of funding but envisages continuing support from the two current donors for a further period of 2 to 3 years beyond the current period of support. However, it is stated in documentation from the two donors that, apart from any unspent funds, SDC support will end in 2022 or early 2023 and Sida support in 2023/4.

The current phase of support is comprised of SDC funds of CHF 4.5 million for support over 37 months, at the time of inception the Swiss franc was almost at parity with the US dollar, and Sida support of USD 7,322,726 over a period of 60 months. As the table below shows, these combine to an annual sum of close to USD 3 million over the three years of joint support. Annex 5 summarises the annual cost of the Secretariat, which averages just under USD 1 million, suggesting activities were expected to account for USD 2 million annually. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the annual budget was substantially underspent in 2020 and 2021 and activities were delayed.

Item	SDC	Sida	Total
Budget provided	4,500,000	7,322,726	
Months in budget	37	60	
Average annual budget	1,459,459	1,464,545	2,924,005

If one considers an amount of around USD 3 million, AFF's approximate planned annual expenditure, as an adequate level of annual funding initially to support AFF activities at a level equivalent to that of recent years, that equates to an annual cost per square kilometre of Africa's forest cover of 6.5 million km² of USD 0.46, or just under 0.5 US cent per ha per year. Compared with the average value of forest products and services generated by one hectare of African forest or woodland, this is insignificant.

In terms of the population of the African continent of 1.413 billion people, it equates to less than USD 0.002—in other words, one-fifth of one US cent per head per year. Compared with the overall

total of funding focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation, landscape restoration and sustainable management, biodiversity, and improved livelihoods, within all of which forests and trees have some role, USD 3 million annually is almost trivial or inconsequential.

To put this figure in context, at the Glasgow UNFCCC COP 26 in November 2021, 12 countries signed up to the Global Forest Finance Pledge (GFFP) of USD 12 billion. In addition, 11 donor countries and the Bezos Earth Fund pledge an amount of at least USD 1.5 billion to support forests in the Congo Basin. These forest specific pledges are in addition to the already substantial funds such as the Global Climate Fund, which include elements relating to forests and trees.

AFF's Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan suggests a target figure for the future AFF annual budget of around USD 6.5 million, essentially twice what was expected by the two donors. Without further justification this seems excessive. AFF should start by aiming at around USD 2 to 3 million, which it has clear capacity to handle within its existing administrative structures. The primary effort should be focused on securing this; if other opportunities arise then these can be considered but it is important that AFF concentrates on work that is clearly within its mandate and experience.

The core problem faced by AFF is that its financing needs are comparatively very small; donor funding is increasingly packaged in very large tranches and what AFF requires is, therefore, easily overlooked. As AFF is a small organisation and largely unknown by few except those for whom forests and trees are of particular interest, it is in danger of being overlooked completely. Yet what AFF can offer is not only highly relevant to effective delivery of most interventions that relate to and/or include a component related to trees and forests, it has ready-made and well-proven capacity and capability to support these initiatives across the continent of Africa. The challenge is how to overcome the lack of recognition and thence to secure support.

2.5.3 *AFF's Value*

Whilst there are some areas of AFF activities that need to be improved, as documented above, overall AFF skills-building events, knowledge and information products, including all the open access material from other sources, are highly appreciated and widely used. At the same time, the much-improved contact between countries generated by the AFF network and the range of countries engaged in webinars, for example, allow exchange of information and experience that was previously not easily made. It is notoriously difficult to put an economic value on education and training, which is why it is seldom done, but there is no doubt that the economic benefits from AFF activities far outweigh the cost that has to date been met by donor funding.

It is important also to remember that there continues to be a great need for AFF to improve the level of knowledge and skills on such basic requirements as forest ecology, silviculture, dendrology and taxonomy, which are fundamental for effective delivery of any forest or tree-based interventions. For a range of reasons, not least the progressive expansion of the syllabus required for forestry training and education since the late 1970s, core subjects are not now taught as comprehensively as in the past. Consequently, there is a role for AFF to assist in remedying this, which must continue and is valued by its members.

Individuals in the organisations that have access to climate change-related finance with whom the team spoke all had substantial awareness of AFF and were very positive about the work that AFF carries out. What seems to be missing is a realistic recognition within these organisations of the parlous position in which AFF will find itself when the current donor funding agreements come to an end. Without new sources of guaranteed finance being available, there is real danger of AFF ceasing to exist. This leads to the conclusion that the long period of reliable donor support has resulted in the

perception that AFF's products and services will somehow always be available to be drawn on as and when needed but without adequate realisation that AFF itself must have support if it is to continue to make them available. The key question, therefore, is what should AFF now do in order to prevent its demise when the current donor funding come to an end?

2.5.4 *Moving Forward – Transition*

Annex 6 contains a short report kindly provided by the Executive Secretary, which summarises the Secretariat's efforts to capture new and additional funding, some of which is already noted in Section 2.5.1. It is evident from this that AFF has been active in pursuing new support and has successfully delivered a number of small projects funded by the Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development. It is also actively engaged with UN-REDD on a new project that could result in more substantial funding and is working with FAO with support from the Green Climate Fund on the Great Green Wall project, for which it has already delivered baseline studies. It has been less successful with other applications.

The key for AFF to securing its future financing is to move from being dependent on one or two donors, who provide direct support of the jointly agreed activities, to a wider and more diversified funding base, but this can only be done with financial support for the transition period to allow for fund-raising while continuing ongoing AFF activities which are essential for maintaining the interest and commitment of its membership. Without such support, there is real danger that AFF will cease to exist. Diversifying funding sources has become more challenging since the overall profile of donor funding changed to favour large commitments that are subsequently divided up, often by multilateral agencies, with a parallel reduction in bilateral funding of smaller projects and programmes. This changed funding pattern does not preclude AFF from securing support from donor funds but the modality by which such funding is achieved has to expand.

Financial support for the transition period would allow for AFF to seek other funding opportunities while still offering services to its members and its open access beneficiaries. Donor support for the transition period will need to have clear milestone targets and close monitoring with built-in flexibility to respond to lessons learnt during the delivery of transition support, to ensure that the funding crisis looming at the end of the current period of donor support is not simply repeated.

2.5.5 *Moving Forward - Potential Funding Sources for the Longer-term*

It is clear that AFF has expertise and experience that is highly relevant for delivery of the national, regional and global requirements for meeting already expressly stated goals and aspirations. There are, however, two major problems that we see are hindering AFF's pursuit of long-term funding.

First, taking the African Union Commission (AUC) publication, *The Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa (2020-2030)*, which acknowledges AFF *for contributing immensely to the technical production of the Framework*, as noted above, that publication states as a priority the *Capacity Development and Knowledge management for SFM*, with an Objective *To improve capacity and knowledge for sustainable forest management by the year 2030*. It goes on to note: *There is limited and fragmented capacity as well as knowledge for sustainable forest management across the continent. It is therefore necessary to enhance and strengthen capacities of forest sector institutions, forest producer groups and communities in Africa through assessment of capacity gaps, and designing and implementing appropriate capacity-building tools and programs.*

While this statement is correct and uncontroversial, it remains effectively one of aspiration. The actions and target indicators associated with it are similarly generic and would need to be developed into more detailed action plans and garner funding for their implementation. Most if not all potential funding sources identified by AFF are similarly constructed: there are good aspirations stated, but no recognition of AFF as a potential partner to support for helping to achieve them. Unless and until these funding sources develop detailed plans for some form of partnership with AFF, with allocated financing, they remain merely potential sources of support.

The second hindrance is that the resources available to support such goals and aspirations are bundled into much more comprehensive plans such as, for example, NDCs, within which the areas of relevance for AFF expertise and experience are just a relatively small part.

The *AFF Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* notes various types of funding, but is largely silent on details of how finance may be obtained; there are also others that exist that are not listed. Examples of funding types include the current model of direct donor finance, accessing the wide range of currently available development finance through short-term commissioned activities, and/or looking for similar opportunities within the commercial sector. Another option is to seek finance for a trust fund that could pay for activities that benefit AFF membership but cannot be funded from other sources and would also provide a cushion to support AFF when gaps in funding support occur. These options are not mutually exclusive. The *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* also gives a comprehensive listing of specific sources of possible funding but, again, is silent on the process of how to go about obtaining such funding.

Membership Fees: It is clear that despite having some 2,500 members, these alone could not support AFF in anything like its current shape. If each member paid USD 100, this would only yield USD 250,000, which is between 5 and 10% of the overall requirement envisaged. Furthermore, many members, and especially those in the poorer countries that have the greatest need for AFF's products and services, would be unlikely to be able to afford even this amount.

The current membership structure is based on individuals only. One possibility would be to create a new category for institutional membership, which could include commercial companies, larger CSOs and international NGOs, and possibly even national governments. All of these have the potential to pay a substantial membership fee, but as AFF products and services are essentially open access it is not immediately obvious what benefit they would derive other than kudos for Corporate Social Responsibility for commercial enterprises and kudos for supporting a public good for others. It might be more appropriate for these organisations to make contributions to an AFF Trust Fund.

Regional actors: AFF has contacts with organisations such as the AU, the African regional economic bodies and AfDB, all of which have policies and strategies relating to forests and trees, but these contacts do not appear to have resulted in their engaging AFF to undertake work on their behalf or in grant funding for AFF's own initiatives. Given its small size and limited visibility, a targeted awareness-raising and marketing campaign directed at potential sources of finance for AFF is needed, to promote not only what AFF is and what it does but also to communicate its urgent need for financial support if it is to continue to operate. The message that it requires new sources of finance has not been successfully articulated.

Forest- or Environment-focused funds: The bulk of the funding sources noted in AFF's *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* relate to climate change, sustainable landscape management, and livelihoods; the majority, especially those relating to climate change, relate to a wide range of sectors, many of which include forest and/or tree components. Most are also aimed at individual countries, with a few open to regional groupings.

This suggests that if AFF is to secure funding from these sources it will need to work, firstly, through multilateral funding agencies, to raise its profile and promote its capabilities for supporting delivery of projects and programmes. Secondly, AFF will also need to promote itself to national governments, regional organisations, and other agencies as a delivery support partner. This will require a much more specific methodology than is laid out in the *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan*.

AFF is already recognised by FAO as a valuable partner, contributing USD 109K for the AUC publication *Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa: 2020-2030*. As a result of effective SDC brokerage, UN-REDD, of which FAO is part, along with UNDP and UNEP, has initiated potentially fruitful contact with AFF. UNFF has provided an opportunity for AFF to raise African visibility and its own profile through increasing African coordination for UNFF meetings but all of these organisations are themselves dependent on donor funds; this gives rise to a potential conflict of interest when asking these organisations to share their funding with AFF, especially when finance may be tight.

Other forest-oriented entities and initiatives such as COMIFAC, CAFI and CBFF, already have access to AFF products and services through open access but this has not yet translated into financial support for AFF. CIFOR/ICRAF may also have potential contributions to make, given the close link between trees outside forests and agroforestry, but CIFOR/ICRAF is itself in a process of reorganisation at the present time.

National governments: National governments could be a potential source of funding. AFF has members in nearly all countries in Africa, some of whom are in positions of potential influence within government. Much of the funding that is available is disbursed through national governments. Thus, African governments will need to be engaged by AFF since, so far, few have recognised the value of AFF though direct support, although there is no clear mechanism by which they could do other than by giving AFF a contract for specific activities.

There are two points of entry for AFF here. The first is for AFF to engage with the multilateral agencies that have secured funding for country level work and seek assignments directly, as is being done with UN-REDD; the second is to engage with African governments and seek financing within the funds that have been allocated to them. Both of these alternatives have advantages and disadvantages and the best strategy appears to be for AFF to try both, although the approach to national governments would have higher transaction costs and there is perhaps less chance of success, at least in the short term, given the lack of support to date. A carefully designed campaign could, on the other hand, secure funding for AFF from the funding agencies themselves, out of funds allocated to national governments. Especially for climate change, this seems to have a greater chance of success than trying to secure support directly from national governments out of the funds once they have been received.

The commercial sector: This could also be a potential source of opportunities for AFF. It is increasingly accepted that the true economic value of many forest products and services is often grossly undervalued and indeed many are completely unvalued and hardly even recognised, if at all. Given this proviso, the industrial plantation and commercial logging sectors are identified as the major forest-based ones contributing to national economies (livelihood uses and direct consumption from forests and woodlands are not recorded and hence therefore are often overlooked) but they are relatively weakly represented in the AFF membership. The industrial plantation sector within Africa, especially that in southern Africa, has more added value in processing than does the commercial logging sector, which widens the potential opportunities for engagement with AFF.

It would therefore be worthwhile for AFF to explore whether potential market opportunities for its services exist in the commercial forestry sector in Africa. While pre-service training and education is still mainly the preserve of public institutions, for in-service training, companies already undertake

much of their operational/technical skills training, as well as health and safety training, in-house. This pattern is likely to continue but there may be areas where AFF could contribute its experience and capability to the benefit of both parties.

For example, AFF has undertaken knowledge and skills building activities on certification that can and should be of value to this sector and there may be other areas where AFF could competitively offer useful support. This should be considered and investigated since it would access commercial finance rather than the broad 'development aid' budget that is the source of most of the finance for topics such as those related to climate change, and would thus diversify AFF's potential range of funding sources.

In assessing this opportunity, AFF would need to complement the views of its Resource Mobilisation Task Force by sourcing views from a few experienced advisers with solid understanding of different aspects of the overall forest sector, how the industry operates currently, and where entry points might be found. Care must be taken, however, to avoid the risk of compromising AFF's independence by becoming dependent on the commercial sector.

Depending on the outcome of this initial investigation, as well as opportunities for expansion of current AFF knowledge and skills building, there may also be value in establishing, and servicing, corporate membership, always with the same proviso mentioned just above. There is also scope for finance from private sector entities that are looking for something to spend money on as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility budget. This could include, as a starting point, exploration of Swiss and Swedish corporations, for which both current donors could assist in promoting the wide value of AFF both within the African continent and indeed globally, given that African forests and their management ultimately have global-level effects.

2.5.6 Key Actions toward Sustainability

It is well known that securing grants from the plethora of available options is increasingly challenging. Each potential source usually has specific requirements in terms of what it will support and the way the application is presented. Even really good proposals will not make it through the selection process unless they meet the criteria that that the funding agency looks for. AFF will need to work to enhance the fundraising skills required to meet the requirements of new funding opportunities, particularly those which primarily focus on climate change or on forests 'value for climate change mitigation.

Development officer: Given the specialised nature of fundraising, it has become the norm for it to be supported by a dedicated development officer, whose role is specifically limited to this task. This role requires up-to-date knowledge of funding opportunities and their detailed requirements, the level of competition for finance, and, of course, how to construct a funding proposal that meets all the requirements of the various prospective funding entities and stands the best chance of obtaining funding.

Given the importance of fundraising for AFF after the current donor funding ends, AFF should create a dedicated position for a development officer with fundraising as its sole mandate. Whilst some familiarity with what AFF does would be helpful, the most important expertise for a development officer is in fund-raising, as the skills required are largely generic and knowledge of AFF specifics can be fairly easily acquired. The development officer's experience should encompass both funding from public institutions and from private entities and foundations.

This leads to consideration of the role of the Resource Mobilisation Task Force, given that it was formed to address these funding issues specifically. The Task Force is important for maintaining a strong link between what AFF does and the priorities and views of its members, but while its members obviously have considerable expertise in their own fields, and presumably experience of fundraising for their own organisations, they do not appear to be experts in fund raising *per se* and it is not their job to perform the detailed tasks involved in the search for funding.

The Task Force should focus on identifying priorities and their relative scale in terms of finance, leaving the development officer, with detailed knowledge of potential sources of finance, to advise on the best methodology for accessing specific sources and fleshing out the details of specific topics and approaches that will increase the chance of success of an application.

Engagement with potential funders: The very extensive list of possible sources of finance laid out in the *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* will need to be analysed in detail and a short list prepared of the most likely ones to prioritise. The key actors at national level and within the bodies holding the funds need to be identified and AFF will have to develop an engagement plan unless a fluent relationship has already been established. These key actors will need to be approached in person by a small group from AFF. For national governments, the group should include the Executive Secretary and the development officer, along with, probably, one or two carefully selected AFF members from the specific country.

For the agencies managing disbursement of large funds, these would be better visited at their regional or head office by the Executive Secretary and development officer, who will need to be very well prepared. Although AFF's marketing of its products is of a high standard, with a clear corporate identity, the expertise that developed these products will need to be refined and applied to a different market segment, that of potential funders, not just those making use of the products and services directly.

The possible opportunities identified in the *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* are potentially interesting and may be feasible but the priority must be a stable financing base on which these new opportunities can be built. While 'chasing the dollar' may be superficially attractive in the short term, it is usually less successful in the longer term as it may well lead organisations to drift away from their core areas of expertise and experience.

AFF may evolve in the coming years not least as a result of changes to its funding structure, but this should be managed and controlled by AFF as part of a clear strategic plan and not led only by short term funding opportunities. An outline SWOT analysis is presented in Table 2 in Section 3.1 as a starting point for development of detailed AFF strategic plan. This can build on the *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan* but will need to consider a wider range of topics than is presented in that document.

3 Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 A Strategic Overview of AFF

The origin of AFF was a network of African forestry professionals in academic and research positions that has evolved into a continent-wide network of members, predominantly graduates, still dominated by researchers and those in academia. From the beginning, it has been supported almost entirely by Sweden and Switzerland. There is no membership fee and its members have a strong influence on its activities within the framework of the goals of donor support. In the latest phase, activities have focused on sustainable forest management linked to climate change responses and include the goals of enhanced social and gender equity and income generation, supported by improved policy formulation, delivered through sound and equitable governance.

Table 2 below presents a summary SWOT analysis of AFF as an outline guide for its future direction: building on its strengths, overcoming limiting factors or weaknesses, following up opportunities, and managing threats. The following subsections provide a narrative to expand on the tabular summary, which is all that can be given as part of an evaluation report. AFF with support from SDC and Sida will need to take forward the ideas presented here that provide an indicative direction, then expand and validate them and produce a detailed strategic plan.

Figure 2 below provides a reconstructed Theory of Change prepared by the evaluation team for AFF. This is provided as an example that could assist AFF going forward, depending on the decisions taken on future support. It is not meant to be definitive, merely a starting point from which AFF can move forward.

The 2021 *Resource Mobilisation and Strategic Plan* prepared by the Resource Mobilisation Task Force is helpful in that it presents a listing of potential sources of finance but AFF is now at the point where there is need to review its own purpose and, particularly, the relationship between its functions as a membership organisation and as a delivery agency for donors or others. These two functions are not necessarily incompatible but they serve different purposes and achieving the aims of the two current donors has already meant working with people who are not necessarily AFF members.

The Task Force for the 2021 report was made up only of members, including two external 'Friends of African Forestry' and their terms of reference were heavily focused on sources of finance. We conclude that, while financing is of paramount importance, the strategic plan process also needs to include a thorough analysis and review of AFF itself, its purpose and functions, and take into consideration any competitor organisations that undertake similar activities within Africa.

This should lead to clear definition of AFF's 'Unique Selling Proposition', or 'USP': what it will do, for whom and how and an analysis of what it can offer that others are not doing or that AFF could do better. In particular, the role of the membership, which has increased ten-fold since 2007, and the question of how to cater to their needs and wants while also delivering services for its partners and clients, needs review. While good understanding of forestry related activities in Africa is obviously important, the team preparing the strategic plan must also include people who have strong expertise in strategic planning.

Figure 3 below provides a stylised flow chart of the recommendations made by the evaluation team, which follow in this section. In the diagram, the boxes that are aimed mainly at AFF are coloured in light green, those primarily for the attention of the donors are shaded in dark pink with the target outcome box is filled in light blue. Green arrows indicate the focus is for AFF, while red arrows are expected to be led by the donors.

Table 2 Summary SWOT Analysis of AFF

Strengths	Limiting factors (Weaknesses)	Implications
AFF network extends across nearly every country in Africa and has successfully bridged language barriers – anglophone, francophone and lusophone countries	Half the members are in academia or research with fewer in public administration / decision making roles and civil society; network does not extend deeply to grass roots level	The AFF network has huge value for communications and engagement but the membership knowledge base does not cover all now relevant topics
Now 2,500 members nearly all of whom have a positive view of AFF and what it does for them	The focus on members may encourage satisfying their 'wants' at the expense of their 'needs'	AFF cannot survive only catering to its membership, it must expand members' views and form partnerships with others
Hierarchical governance structure with Governing Council and Executive Committee members elected for fixed terms with regional balance	Danger of over-reliance on AFF membership for studies and training events may lead to AFF having insufficient exposure to new ideas and thinking Governance structure and Constitution now outdated	Regionally balanced membership is valuable but AFF must run its membership function in parallel with and subsidised by income generated Review and revise Constitution and Governance structure
Extensive range of commissioned studies and skills building material as well as skills transfer events and extensive open access material	Open access material reduces value of membership, which is free. Some material outside the mainstream of forestry and agroforestry is of somewhat suboptimal standard	The role of being a membership organisation needs to be reviewed and revised, quality control of some publications and training materials needs tightening
AFF is highly appreciated by those knowledgeable on trees and forests in Africa and who have engaged with AFF previously	AFF has a very limited profile outside the sector, so potential users may not be aware of its potential value to them	AFF has to develop and deliver a promotion plan with potential partners and users of its services as a priority, focusing on income generation for AFF
The African persona of AFF is highly appreciated by its members	AFF has not been able to translate this into financial support for its activities	The African persona should not limit engagement from a wider pool of expertise when necessary
Opportunities	Threats	Implications
Large amounts of donor finance with potentially at least partial relevance for trees and forests now available, predominantly climate change related	Funds for climate change and biodiversity have many other claims on them, meaning trees and forests may be overlooked, <i>e.g.</i> , NDCs. Most funding is delivered in large tranches, which are difficult for small organisations to access	AFF needs to engage with African governments and other programme funders and implementers to provide its services to them thereby building its reputation and promoting its services
	AFF is not financially resilient and currently remains dependent on direct donor finance	AFF must build a secure reserve to act as a buffer as future financial inflows will be irregular
There is a good potential niche role for AFF to assist others with knowledge enhancement and skills improvement around trees and forests as part of Sustainable Landscape Management	AFF has not clearly defined its Unique Selling Proposition (USP) on its potential value in the wider current global/African context, as, <i>e.g.</i> , for climate change	AFF must clarify and decide on its USP then promote this to possible partners. Clear specification and separation of membership support and commercial contracting will be required
AFF can work with other institutions and organisations with common wider interests using MoUs, LoAs or similar to define the respective roles	Very limited progress made on this so far, none apart from organisations themselves directly dependent on donor support	Partnerships may be short or long term but are crucial to AFF operations as they can overcome its limited influence and restricted recognition of its value

Figure 2 AFF Reconstructed Theory of Change

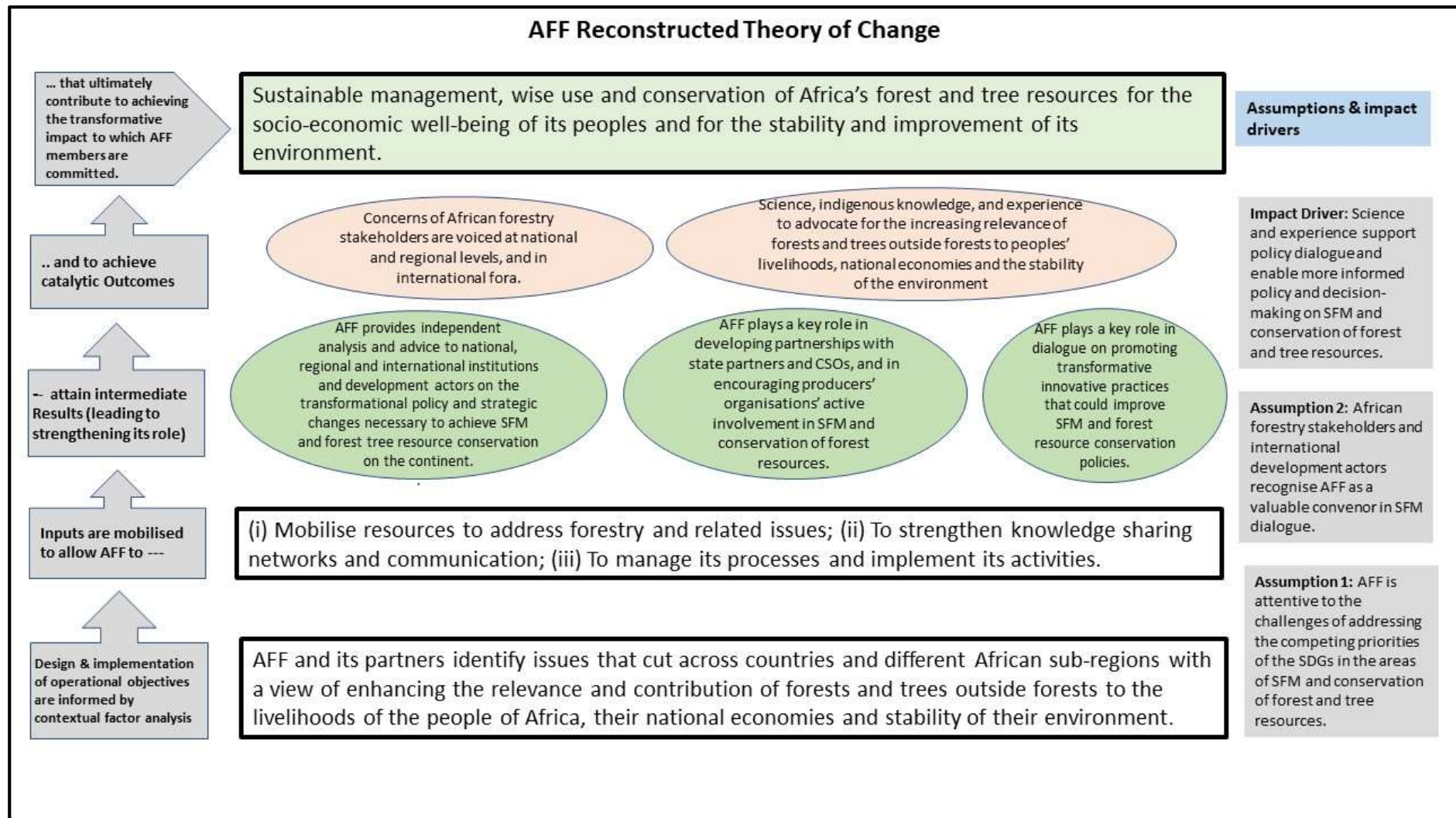
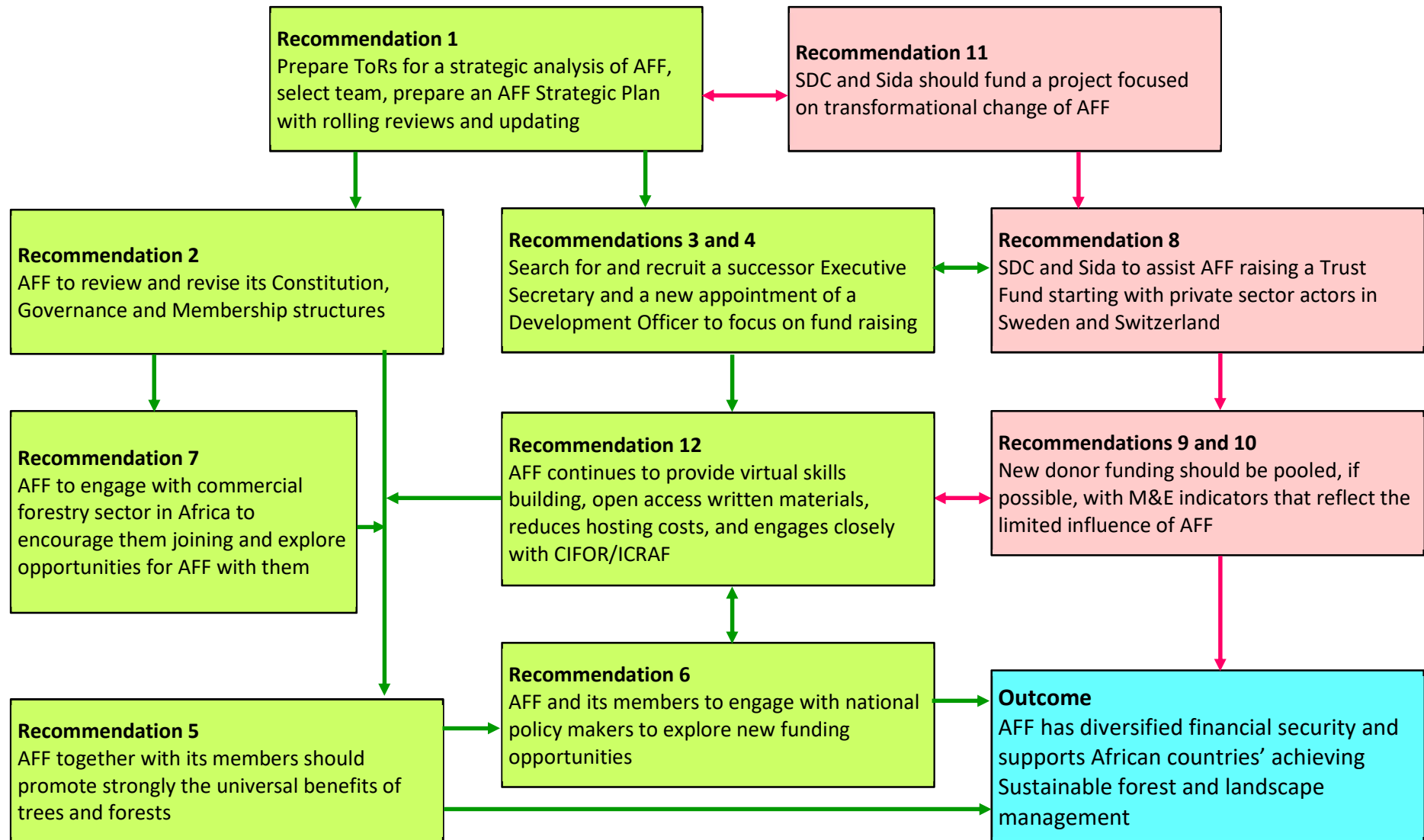


Figure 3 Flow Chart of Recommendations



In addition to the 2021 *Resource Mobilisation and Strategic Plan* referred to above, in 2017 AFF also produced the report *A programmatic approach to the work of AFF*, as noted in Section 2.1.2. where the diagram from that report is repeated. We commented in Section 2.1.2. that the seven programmes include three different elements. Programme 1 is effectively a target goal while programmes 2, 3 and 4 that can be employed within the conducive policy framework identified as programme 5 and programmes 6 and 7 relate to the activities that AFF undertakes to achieve the goal of programme 1 through programmes 2, 3 and 4.

The strategic planning process will need to take the ideas from these two documents, as well as from the *AFF Reconstructed Theory of Change* in Figure 2, and subject them to a very detailed (SWOT) analysis of the external (business) environment in which AFF will operate and its internal strengths and limitations. The external environment has opportunities, which AFF can seek, as well as threats, including from other organisations offering similar services, as noted in Table 2 above. Analysis of AFF strengths and limiting factors will lead to identification of AFF's Unique Selling Proposition.

The external environment in which AFF will operate is very different from that which existed when it started, including more competitors to offer the services AFF provides, which has implications for the new Strategic Plan and AFF's governance, including division of labour and delegation of powers and responsibilities.

In a situation of disparate interests, it is standard practice for organisations undertaking strategic planning to seek guidance from people from outside the organisation who have no commitment to the current structure and strategies and will ask penetrating questions querying established procedures (why specific things are done a certain way) and what happens if certain events occur (the 'What if' questions).

Thus, rather than rely on a working group composed of AFF members, the bulk of this work should be done by individuals from outside AFF's membership who have experience and expertise in preparing strategic plans for organisations working in a range of relevant sectors. This external team will rely on an advisory group drawn from Secretariat personnel, selected members who have sound knowledge of AFF and its operations will be important, together with donor representatives. Membership of this advisory group must be flexible to include diversity of experience and expertise to be able to provide specific information and give advice on particular issues that the plan will address.

The strategic planning process is normally recursive, with several iterations of the plan being produced, reviewed and revised. The Strategic Plan that results from this process must also then be subjected to regular review, and modification if necessary. In other words, 'business as usual' may well continue, but this should be decided after thorough review, not simply 'by default'.

Recommendation 1 – AFF should prepare terms of reference for an external team to prepare a detailed strategic (SWOT) analysis and then formulate a strategic plan for AFF and procedures for regular review and revision. This external team should be composed of individuals with a track record of strategic planning for organisations similar to AFF, and be supported by an advisory group with flexible membership drawn from AFF members with a balance of expertise and experience, along with Secretariat personnel, as required, and donor representatives.

3.2 *AFF as a Membership Organisation*

Between 2003 and 2005 a project on *Lessons Learnt on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa* was implemented as a joint activity of the African Forest Research Network (AFORNET), based at the

African Academy of Sciences, FAO's Forestry Department and the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA) through its Committee on International Forestry. Two workshops discussed the results of this work, one in Nairobi, Kenya (9 – 13 February 2003) and another in Uppsala, Sweden (18 – 24 October 2004). The delegates to these workshops recommended that participation of Africa in these processes is an area that needs urgent improvement and that the SFM project should go further than this analysis, for example by identifying and facilitating ways to support African delegations at UNFF sessions.

The delegates further recommended that efforts be made to constitute an appropriate mechanism to continue with continent-wide dialogue on forest issues. They proposed setting up of an African Forest Forum (AFF) as a framework that will provide a platform for stakeholders interested in African forestry to dialogue freely on chosen issues and evaluate ways of and create mechanisms for solving forestry problems. They agreed AFF should be an apolitical, objective, independent and non-profit making entity that incorporates all stakeholders interested in African forestry; foresters and non-foresters. AFF was thus started by these delegates with support from Sweden. The first meeting of the Governing Council was held between 15 and 17 October, 2007.

Membership has grown from 253 in 2007 to approximately 2500 now and has consolidated its reach to almost the whole of the African continent (53 out of 54 countries). Its membership base has widened, including people from public forest administrations, civil society and some from the private sector. It has two separate but complementary roles; firstly, as a membership organisation, to respond to the 'wants' of its members, which it has done successfully, and, secondly as a programme that makes knowledge and information widely available and provides skills building opportunities to its members and to non-members without discrimination between them.

3.2.1 *AFF Members*

It is clear that in general its members highly value AFF and what it does for them, but it has to attract funding if it is to continue to serve their needs. There is no cost to members, although we have learned that many members who are engaged by AFF on a paid basis often pay back at least part of their fees to AFF, which is admirable and demonstrates high regard for AFF and its activities. What nearly all members can do is to contribute to the wider awareness and recognition of AFF within their countries of residence and when attending regional or global meetings.

We do not recommend charging membership dues because they would be unaffordable to many of those who need the information and training, and because in any case membership fees would not be able to furnish the amount of funding AFF needs in order to survive.

However, given the fact that AFF provides non-members with open access to so much information, it may be desirable to consider whether membership should accrue benefits that are not available to those outside the membership, while still maintaining open access for studies, journals, and training. Thus, what started as an information-exchange network can also become more valuable to the members in its current form. This would benefit AFF by allowing it to show potential donors its value to members specifically.

AFF membership can be made more valuable by raising the 'status' of those who hold AFF membership. It should, in other words, be of career value for a member's CV to state that they are an AFF member, by for example including a requirement, such as engaging in continuing professional development. This could easily be defined as attending two AFF skills-transferring events every year. AFF can confirm attendance through its official records of events held.

Membership would thus demonstrate interest in AFF and make AFF membership more valuable for CVs. AFF cannot replace national forestry institutions that are seeking to establish professional membership with codes of conduct, *etc.*; exams, and/or other qualifications; that is not AFF's role. However, AFF can provide a USP for its members such as the one described here.

Other benefits that could accrue to members might - assuming adequate funding is obtained - include the possibility of holding occasional themed "discussions", which could include special presentations, for members and perhaps selected invitees only, possibly combined with a members-only annual general meeting. AFF could decide on the theme and thus start to push the boundaries of the subjects its members are exposed to, with recordings made accessible later, again to members only for perhaps 12 to 18 months, then moved to open access.

AFF also needs to make sure that its younger members, many of whom have often had less than ideal pre-service training or education, are given the consideration they need and deserve. One way this could be done is to develop a mechanism through which younger foresters can shadow more experienced ones on assignments and benefit by skills building through mentoring.

Forests and trees are increasingly seen within the wider perspective of sustainable landscape management and restoration. While not offering membership *per se* to people outside forestry, AFF needs to continue to reach out widely to engage with those involved in other land uses, including all aspects of sustainable landscape management. AFF should not be shy in engaging people from outside its membership when dealing with issues that require specialist knowledge and experience.

3.2.2 *AFF Governance*

The current governance structure is now outdated. Governance needs substantial modification to take account of the evolution of AFF. This necessitates revising the Constitution to fit AFF's needs today. AFF can develop this initial suggestion, with funders, perhaps including Sweden and Switzerland in the short term, possibly contributing ideas as well. The AFF Constitution was originally written in 2007 and updated in 2012, it is summarised in Box 2 below. The evaluation team has reviewed the Constitution's sections related to governance structure and identified a number of issues including:

- A lack of transparency on decision-making, such as lack of accessibility to members of minutes of Governing Council and Executive Committee meetings and decisions;
- A lack of clarity on the powers of the Members' Forum as well as on the functions of the Executive Committee;
- We agree with Professor Kowero that the statement in paragraph 1(b) of Article 1 that 'Words importing the masculine gender include the feminine gender' should be updated when the opportunity to amend the Constitution next arises. Such amendment or revision of the Constitution should be done in any case as part of the development of the AFF's new Strategic Plan, and particularly because the use of 'him' to encompass the feminine gender makes the organisation appear unaware of the gender issues on which we recognise that AFF has itself been trying to raise awareness among its members.
- Use of the masculine gender in the Constitution to encompass both male and female is also inconsistent: Of the three places where 'him' appears in the text, 'him/her' is actually used in one instance, in listing one reason for an office becoming vacant as: 'The office bearer becomes grossly incompetent and the Governing Council votes him/her out'. Apart from being inconsistent with Article 1 on the treatment of gender in the document, the use of 'him/her' in this instance has the unfortunate effect of only acknowledging the existence of women as distinct from men when they are 'grossly incompetent'.

Box 2 Summary of AFF Governance Structure

According to AFF's Constitution, AFF governance is divided among three bodies: the Members, the Governing Council, and the Executive Committee. A small Secretariat of paid staff tasked with AFF's day-to-day operations. AFF's activities and functions are divided amongst the three governing bodies as follows:

The **Members' Forum** is open to all AFF members. AFF membership is *gratis* and open to individuals in forestry management, research, and education and other relevant pursuits. The Forum meets at least once every five years to consider matters referred to it by, and generally provide broad guidance to, the Governing Council. It is also empowered under the Constitution to make rules, regulations, and procedures; to delegate any of its powers or functions under the Constitution to the Governing Council, and to perform any other functions as needed. The Forum elects a Chair and Vice Chair for five-year terms.

Every AFF member has one vote in the Forum, with resolutions decided by simple majority at a Forum meeting at which quorum is met, with the Chair casting the deciding vote in case of a tie.

The **Governing Council (GC)** comprises 21 members, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Members' Forum, who must be from the African continent; fifteen representatives from the African continent, geographically balanced according to sub-region; two from outside the African continent; two from civil society organisations; and two from the private sector. The Executive Secretary of the AFF is an *ex officio* member of the GC.

The GC's functions are to appoint members of the Executive Committee; recruit the Executive Secretary; formulate rules and procedures to guide the activities and development of AFF, and for its own conduct, subject to approval by the Members' Forum; make decisions on submissions from, and monitor the work of, the Executive Committee, the Secretariat, and any other committees; set rules, regulations, and guidelines for financial management and procurement; appoint external auditors for annual audits of AFF's accounts; appoint independent consultants for general and systems audits of AFF's activities every five years; delegate to the Executive Committee, or to any other committee it may appoint, the powers and functions necessary for implementing the functions and objectives of AFF; undertake any other necessary functions for achieving the objectives of AFF subject to approval by the Members' Forum; and furnish annual financial and technical reports every year.

The **Executive Committee (EC)** is a committee of the GC whose composition, membership, powers, and functions are decided by the Council. It selects its own Chair and Vice-Chair, who serve for three years and may be re-elected once.

Voting members of the GC and EC, hold tenure for a maximum of five years, which can be extended by the GC.

In general, the GC and EC decide on their own procedures for conducting their meetings, with the GC endorsing the procedures adopted by the EC. Both meet at least once per year. Quorum for each is 50% of its members.

The GC can establish **special committees, working groups and task forces** which can include members of the GC, other members of the AFF, and any non-member who is involved in or interested in the mission of AFF. The GC determines the purposes and powers of any such committee and regulates it.

The **Executive Secretary (ES)** serves as Secretary in the Members' Forum meetings and also takes minutes at the meetings of both GC and EC, distributing these minutes to members of the GC and EC. S/he also keeps records of appointments of officers of the GC and EC, as well as of all resolutions and orders of the GC and EC which thus constitute instructions to the Secretariat. Resolutions and orders from other committees are recorded but go through the EC to the GC before being passed to the Secretariat as instructions. All minutes, resolutions, and orders must be signed by the Chairs of the GC, the EC, and any other committee involved.

The ES also heads the Secretariat and performs functions delegated by the GC Chair; serves as CEO and official representative of AFF; prepares an annual budget of revenues and expenditures of AFF for CG approval; manages all AFF resources, ensuring efficient and effective Secretariat operations; drafts required procedure manuals; performs functions related to recruitment; develops proposals and initiatives for donor funding; implements GC and EC decisions; and reports to the GC through the EC.

The **Secretariat** is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the AFF's programme, including mobilisation and coordination of members to undertake activities approved by the GC and EC.

Source: African Forest Forum Constitution (2007, rev. 2012) – Article 4: Membership and Governance

Recommendation 2 – AFF should continue to operate as a membership organisation responding to the expressed needs of its members. At the same time, it should also seek expertise from outside its membership to assist it in achieving the financial security without which it cannot meet the needs of its members. Its Constitution and Governance structure, including the functions of the Secretariat should be reviewed and revised to be coherent with the structure required for the AFF Strategic Plan (Recommendation 1).

3.3 Future Financing of AFF

The greatest current threat to AFF is its heavy reliance on donor funding, which is not unusual for bodies of this type, notwithstanding that since this donor support started, previous evaluations have been largely positive, as is this one. The greatest concern is that with less than one year of donor support still in place, there is little sign of alternative sources of funding being identified, much less being in place. There is close contact NGARA and FAO but neither of these has any financing flowing into AFF other than potential contracts from FAO or diverted donor funds from NGARA. There is new funding coming from UN-REDD, brokered by SDC.

3.3.1 Finding New Sources of Finance

AFF now has to diversify its funding base and will thereafter have to deliver activities that are defined by the people for whom it is working. This will have to also include the interests and requirements of those who provide its funding, under whatever agreement (contract) AFF makes. Funding can be secured from:

- Donor countries, either directly or through international organisations that themselves receive donor financing;
- Foundations (which may also be interested in supporting less closely specified activities than other donors); and/or
- Work done under contract on specific projects, on which overhead may be charged which will go toward funding the public goods aspects of AFF's work.

Funding for AFF work cannot be purely market-based because it provides public goods for the benefit of people in Africa, such as its open access resources and free-of-charge training events. Ultimately everyone must be included, as forests cross boundaries and what affects one country affects all to some extent; hence the use of overhead charges to fund these aspects of AFF's endeavours.

There are therefore three potential sources of finance for AFF to explore:

- Accessing the very large amounts of donor finance relevant for forests and trees and especially that around climate change, while not overlooking smaller and more forestry specific opportunities;
- Seeking support from other entities such as foundations, from which a trust fund might ultimately result; and
- Exploring closer engagement with relevant commercial enterprises.

All three can be targeted concurrently.

AFF products and services primarily tackle matters that improve livelihoods and quality of life as well as providing national and borderless environmental benefits. Although African forests and trees are of primary importance to those living on the continent, their size and extent means that they are also important globally in respect of climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, as well as in terms of

supporting development of sustainable livelihoods and economic well-being of all who live in Africa—which itself is also a global aim, having been the goal of development aid for many decades. Enhancing protection and sustainable management of forests is therefore of importance outside as well as within Africa.

Logically, then, both national governments and the global community should be willing to pay for forest benefits. AFF has a uniquely African persona and is very popular within the continent of Africa, so it can be argued that African governments, as its beneficiaries, should support it. There is, however, no evidence to date that they are willing or able to do so to any large scale, given their other pressing priorities, although one contribution that nearly all members could make is to contribute to the wider awareness and recognition of the value of AFF within their countries of residence, and even, too, when attending regional or global meetings.

AFF has therefore been built with, and relies on, external donor support. While there have been successes in securing support from donors and from international institutions such as FAO or other UN bodies, these institutions themselves are also largely donor-funded. For example, there is preliminary work started on engagement with UN-REDD through which AFF could receive finance, although the financial requirements of AFF secretariat support for this is going to be considerably higher than this alone can provide.

The AFF Secretariat has submitted a number of proposals to prospective funding agencies in the last 3 years but with disappointingly limited success. The complexity of the donor funding landscape with very large sums often distributed either through national governments or intermediaries will require that AFF raises its profile with both national governments and intermediary agencies as a diligent organisation able to deliver high quality services and improving knowledge and skills. It will also need to understand the complexities of the process involved in making successful applications.

The Executive Secretary, Prof. Godwin Kowero, has led AFF ably and successfully since it started. He is now coming to the point where he would wish to hand over the responsibility and move on to a well-earned retirement. This was recognised in 2021 by the Governing Council but delayed by COVID-19 restrictions. The complexities of AFF are such that a new person should be appointed as soon as possible with an extended handover period of around one year. During this period, development of an AFF Strategic Plan should be a priority, which will identify potential sources of finance, most of which will come from global funding and the agencies through which this is disbursed.

Tackling the complexities of securing finance from a range of sources necessitates specific expertise in fund raising hence requiring the creation of a development officer position within the Secretariat. This person would not be expected to have a technical forestry background; the Secretariat already has this. Rather, they would be required to review and provide detailed analysis of potential funding sources to identify possible interventions where AFF experience and expertise mean it could offer support at a competitive cost. They would also need to understand the application processes and be able to frame proposals to give them the highest chance of success as well as identifying and rating potential partners in different countries and regions and determining how these could best be approached for joint proposals.

Once potential sources of finance are identified, each will need to be analysed in respect of its appropriateness for AFF and the key areas of potential interest compared with AFF strengths and track record to create a prioritised list. Given that global finance, such as that earmarked for climate change, is disbursed through countries and/or intermediaries, a decision would be needed on how best to approach securing such finance, including the question of who is the optimal point of contact for AFF. A decision would also be required on whether first contact should be virtual or physical; if the latter is chosen, this could then be followed up virtually.

Whichever mode of communication is used, AFF should field the Executive Secretary and Development Officer plus a relevant specialist from the Secretariat to make such contact as and how appropriate. Selected members in specific countries, and/or those who are well known in international organisations, could also be included.

For example, as much of the funding potentially relevant to AFF is accessed by national governments, AFF could engage selected members in a particular country to help prepare and support a visit to national funding officials by senior representative from the AFF Secretariat, preferably the Executive Secretary as well as the development officer, to promote AFF and explore opportunities for paid contractual work to support national initiatives. Since most of the donor funding to national governments is likely to be administered outside the agencies with which AFF and most of its members are familiar, AFF members selected for this task need to have special skills and experience. Specific promotional materials may also need to be prepared, in a variety of media, but AFF already has high skills and a good track record in this.

AFF will need to prepare short but tightly focused concept notes outlining how it could help support specific opportunities. This is already noted on page 14 of the *Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Plan*; this document also identifies potential funding sources although in places it needs updating—for instance, it is important nowadays to ensure that organisations dealing with matters such as agroforestry and trees outside forests, both of which are encompassed in sustainable landscape restoration and management, are included.

There is also need to develop partnerships with implementing organisations such as IUCN, WWF and WRI, all of whom are already engaged with many of the available sources of finance, and to which AFF could offer valuable assistance. At the same time, since achievement of the overall aim of sustainable forest and landscape management requires coherence from policy level to activities on the ground, AFF could usefully offer support to those agencies and institutions dealing with field level implementation, such as modified skills-building materials. A comprehensive suite of brief ‘project ideas’ will be required to ‘market’ AFF successfully.

Recommendation 3 – The search for a new Executive Secretary should restart soon preferably with a handover period of at least 12 months to ensure that revisions to AFF structure and governance can be solidly accomplished together with a revised approach to securing its finance before the current Executive Secretary leaves.

Recommendation 4 – AFF should recruit and appoint a development officer with appropriate expertise and a solid track record in fundraising to take responsibility within the Secretariat for fundraising and complement the existing knowledge and expertise within it.

Recommendation 5 – AFF should increase its efforts to promote the universal benefits of forests and trees in Africa, as well as its own contribution to sustaining them, to increase awareness of AFF within governments and potential funding organisations and for those already engaged in delivery of such funding to whom AFF expertise and experience would be of value. AFF members should also be encouraged to promote AFF within their own governments and networks.

Recommendation 6 – AFF Secretariat personnel should engage with national policymakers in person to explain what AFF can provide and explore funding needs and opportunities.

With regard to contract work, there is potential for sponsorship from commercial enterprises that could benefit from AFF products and services, but many aspects of work on forests and trees that historically were the remit of African governments—*e.g.*, research, tree seed supplies, and training in specific skills—have been privatised, especially in respect of commercial-scale forestry (see Box 3

below). Thus, AFF would have to engage with commercial enterprises more closely than it has done to date to identify areas in which it can provide services of value to them and then negotiate contracts for delivery of these services.

AFF would thus have to work hard to secure contracts. It would also run two risks: capture by special interest groups or becoming captive to having to 'chase the dollar'; FAO has experienced having to chase the dollar with regard to getting funding from other international organisations for doing technical work in which FAO has more expertise. AFF should preferably be protected from both of these risks.

In improving AFF engagement with the commercial forestry sector, this should be largely within the capacity of the Task Force for Resource Mobilisation, possibly with some outside expertise and experience brought in to strengthen it. It would certainly be worthwhile to consider a new category of membership but further work is required to clarify what new benefits this would bring to companies taking it up. There is also potential for AFF to assist the commercial sector with skills building, especially on new topics and policies.

Recommendation 7 – AFF should undertake to expand its membership with the commercial forestry sector and explore potential funding opportunities within that sector.

Securing a trust fund is not going to be easy but there may be a role for support from SDC and Sida in this, firstly, through helping AFF identify those sources of such finance that might be interested in supporting AFF and, secondly, through making connections with appropriate enterprises based in Sweden or Switzerland and their neighbouring countries.

Recommendation 8 – AFF should approach SDC and Sida to help identify further sources of finance, particularly private sector actors in Sweden and Switzerland and their neighbouring countries.

3.3.2 Decisions for the Current Donors

As is evident from our analysis, during the current phase of both SDC and Sida projects AFF has largely delivered the agreed activities it was committed to deliver at a high standard, notwithstanding that in some areas, things could have been better. AFF reporting has been comprehensive and transparent. The donors' approach of using two separate but complementary projects, however, gave AFF access to increased finance but it also required AFF to duplicate its reporting and to keep separate accounts.

Recommendation 9 – In similar circumstances in the future, donors should endeavour to pool their finance to reduce the complexity and obviate the need for parallel management and reporting.

Comparing the two logical frameworks, the commonalities appear to be sufficient to have allowed pooled funding for a single joint project, which would have been more beneficial for AFF in terms of efficient use of its limited resources. In addition, the indicators relating to changes at national level and above being brought about through support to AFF seem to us overly optimistic given that, while AFF is clearly a relevant partner for SDC and Sida, it is a comparatively small organisation with a limited reach. It is almost impossible to attribute any changes to AFF directly since there are many influences far beyond AFF control.

Recommendation 10 - The predicted results in the donors' theories of change need to make clear their assumptions and be realistic on what AFF can achieve with its leverage; logical framework indicators then need to reflect this.

This evaluation covers the third phase of support by the two donors, SDC and Sida. As explained and discussed in the report, while the intention at the start of the current phase was for AFF to have built up at least partial financial support from other sources by the time this phase ended, that has not been achieved. The reasons for this are not fully clear although the delays to progress on activities due to COVID-19 restrictions has not helped; both projects therefore agreed to extended time frames, SDC until early 2023 and Sida until mid-2024.

As the revised end points for the current donors are now approaching, both donors face a decision regarding which future path they wish to follow. There are really only three options:

- 1 A **continuation pathway** – this would essentially be to continue to provide support as for earlier phases with adjustments to the activities sought from AFF to reflect the current wider policy framework and to further improve the delivery of policy outcomes on the ground;
- 2 A **transformation pathway** – this would provide support that could include some continuation of activities reflecting the current wider policy framework, as in the continuation pathway, but with a much stronger concentration on building up AFF as an independent actor in the broad field of sustainable forestry and land use in Africa, with a diversity of sources of finance that also allow continued delivery of a revised and updated mandate to serve the needs of its membership; or
- 3 A **disruption pathway** – this would involve no further ‘core’ funding to AFF, leaving the organisation to sink or swim on its own.

The three pathways described briefly above do not have concrete boundaries and do have some overlaps. In very simple terms, the continuation pathway implies merely delaying the point at which a decision on future funding of AFF has to be taken, while the disruption pathway would almost certainly lead to the rapid demise of AFF, such that the substantial investment to date would leave little legacy from a valuable programme that has existed for 15 years and has grown into a valuable resource for Africa.

If AFF loses all of its current financial support it will have to significantly downsize by losing staff; this will severely compromise its functionality as well as being costly, both in terms of having to recover financial support and because of the gap in its flow of outputs that would inevitably follow. An economic valuation of AFF’s products and events and would show benefits of great value, especially to poorer countries and those working within them, because they are freely provided. AFF’s loss would mean that people working across Africa would suffer the loss of easy access to relevant and useful information and indeed knowledge.

The transformational pathway offers a range of changes to the *status quo* in terms of both activities and means of financing; it therefore represents a good, flexible compromise solution. Although the transformation pathway would result in AFF sourcing finance from a wider range of opportunities, nearly all of these sources are ultimately from donor country funds.

If it is to continue AFF must have a safety net while it works to make changes in its funding sources, including possible short-term solutions, such as contracts, for longer-term sustainability. AFF needs to have a time-limited financial support commitment from its current donors and a detailed, realistic action plan for transitioning from this donor funding to become an organisation with some amount of core funding and/or a trust fund as a cushion against financing gaps, although it is recognised that neither of these is likely to be easy to acquire in the current economic climate.

Recommendation 11 – SDC and Sida should consider complementing the remaining funds available with a new two-to-three-year support package to AFF focused primarily on supporting AFF to secure new finance while also enabling AFF to continue its activities to respond to the needs of its members, maintain its open access literature resources, and make needed revisions to its membership and governance structures.

3.3.3 Potential Cost Savings

Covid restrictions had a major impact on the timing and methodology of implementation of activities originally planned by AFF, but on the positive side, AFF rapidly adapted to the enforced changes and has made good use of virtual means. The key limitation to this is often internet connectivity for participants, although also sometimes for speakers themselves, and not all speakers have yet made a sufficient modification in their delivery methods to be fully fluent virtually.

Virtual communications are effective in transferring information to larger groups, less so for small groups dealing with potentially divisive topics or where negotiations are required, although these limitations can be overcome as, for example, in the recent successfully concluded IPCC negotiations on their sixth assessment report. Virtual communications are less effective when practical skills are being transferred, although this is not necessarily relevant to most AFF communications. The greatest benefit of virtual communications is the direct cost savings in terms of travel and accommodation, as well as the indirect cost savings in reduced travelling time. Subject to the adequacy of internet connections, virtual communications can also draw participants from a wide geographical area at no additional cost.

Although it is hard to judge without access to the full details, costs for AFF physical meetings could also certainly be reduced by limiting travel costs and lowering the type of accommodation, making use of training centres, for example, or student accommodation. Air travel costs, which are often already high in Africa, are also likely to rise substantially in the near future.

If AFF is forced to shed personnel, this would inevitably compromise its ability to secure donor funding and could compromise the vital communications that are crucial for AFF operations. An alternative option could be to change to a cheaper—but less reliable and less effective—hosting agreement. While efforts to reduce costs would be valuable and some reductions might be possible through using a different host, this cannot yet be ascertained as CIFOR-ICRAF is itself in the process of undergoing changes. In addition, the cost of AFF hosting by ICRAF should be seen in the light of the high quality of services provided in terms of security, communications, finance and audit control, and HR. The reliability and convenient location also bring many advantages, including, potentially, a closer operational linkage with ICRAF so that trees outside forests are given the weight of attention needed to improve AFF access to many of the funding opportunities now available.

Recommendation 12 – AFF should continue to increase the proportion of events that are conducted virtually and seek to try and reduce the cost of physical events by limiting travel and using cheaper accommodation. It should also continue negotiations with ICRAF/CIFOR to see if reductions in the cost of its hosting arrangements could be achieved.

Box 3 Tree Seed, Forest Genetics and Plantations

Starting in the mid-1960s, the UK development assistance, through the then Commonwealth Forestry Institute at Oxford with Denmark, through the Danish Tree Seed Centre at Humlebaek, provided tree seed to forestry research institutions in developing countries. The UK focused on Central and South America, initially pines but later expanded its focus to include agroforestry species. Denmark focused initially on southeast Asia, particularly on teak and Gmelina, but then also expanded its focus into agroforestry species. Both of these institutions provided sample lots of a range of provenances free of charge to partner countries, who in return established provenance trials and sent back data on survival, form and growth rate for meta-analysis.

These have proven valuable, particularly given that their targets for assistance were developing countries. In respect of the Central American pines, for example, some provenances have now been lost in their original home and these trials and subsequent plantations from seed stands and seed orchards provide valuable *ex-situ* genetic conservation resources. Although the Danish Tree Seed Centre still operates through the University of Copenhagen, the work done at Oxford was largely taken over by the non-profit CAMCORE, based at the State University of North Carolina at Raleigh. Seed can still be obtained from there but now requires a membership fee, which is too expensive for poorer countries. This change was probably inevitable as most donors' policy for support to forestry is now based on plantation forestry being undertaken by the industrial sector rather than by public forest services as in the past.

Within Africa, the industrial forestry sector, particularly that for plantations, has been largely devolved from the public sector. AFF has relatively few members working within the industrial sector. From its survey of member interests, it appears there is considerable member interest in plantations at a range of scales but few national tree seed centres are running at the quality level they achieved in the past.

Although plantations at a range of scales are expected to be part of landscape restoration in Africa, the lack of national guidelines for these is of concern. At present, countries often rely on the Corporate Social Responsibility commitments of those external companies undertaking plantation development. While most of the larger commercial companies conduct their technical training themselves, there is a role for AFF in information exchange and skills enhancement for the policy and strategic aspects of plantation development.

At the same time, while requirements for seed and other reproductive material for industrial use may now be a matter dealt with by large companies, there remains a need for governments to ensure that plant health regulations are effectively delivered and that tree seed and other reproductive material is available and of high quality for smallholder use, as evidenced by the Gatsby Foundation project in East Africa successfully promoting F1 hybrid *Eucalyptus* clones for small and medium sized farmers. This requires aid funding and free exchange of information as was the case in the past but CAMCORE costs may be beyond the means of smaller and poorer countries.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference for the evaluation



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
Global Programme Climate Change and Environment



Sweden
Sverige

External evaluation of the

**Swiss (SDC) and Swedish (Sida) contributions to
the African Forest Forum (AFF)**

Terms of reference for the consultants

March 2022

1. Introduction

The foreseen external evaluation of the work of the African Forest Forum (AFF) in the implementation of Swiss and Swedish programmes is a joint endeavour of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The present document sets out the terms of reference (ToR) for the external final evaluation of the AFF programmes financed by the SDC from 2010 to 2021(2022), and Sida from 2019 to 2022(2023)⁴. It provides background information and describes the context, the scope and the objectives of the evaluation. It offers guidance towards the evaluation process and the expected deliverables. The ToR will be an integral part of the contract for the evaluation mandate⁵.

2. Background information

2.1. The SDC and its Global Programme Climate Change and Environment (GPCCE)

The GPCCE is one among five Global Programmes (GP) of the SDC. The other GP are: Food Security, Water, Migration and Health. The overall goal of these thematic programmes is to address global challenges through global projects and cooperation approaches as well as policy dialogue, with the objective of contributing to poverty reduction and to better lives and improved livelihoods, particularly for the world's poor and disadvantaged populations.

The GPCCE's specific reference document is its **Strategic Framework 2021-2024**⁶⁷. As stated in the Preface, "Climate change is a major global risk that threatens progress towards sustainable development and, in fact, the survival of humanity. [...] Low and lower-middle income countries are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. They lack adequate resources and capacities to implement effective measures for reducing emissions and pollution as well as adapting to the changing climate. Other challenges such as conflicts, food insecurity and inequalities, reinforce their vulnerability. There is a growing need to tackle the root causes of climate change and environmental degradation, as well as to invest in risk prevention and adaptation to increase the resilience of people and socioeconomic systems against external shocks".

Without further action to reduce poverty, provide access to basic services, increase adaptive capacity, and mitigate emissions, impacts from climatic change could push millions back into poverty. Global and local economic development and fossil-fuel based societies are exposing the environment to multiple pressures: Natural resource depletion and greenhouse gas emissions are exacerbating climate change. The effects of climate change, such as affected

⁴ Both programme contributions were extended by a year, due to the Covid-19 pandemics.

⁵ As agreed between the SDC and Sida, the costs of the evaluation will be borne by the SDC, which will contract the external evaluators. Sida may provide financial resources for potential follow-up studies to the present evaluation.

⁶ https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/de/documents/publikationen/Diverses/Programme_Framework_2021-

⁷ [Global Programme Climate Change and Environment en.pdf](#)

water cycles, changing weather patterns and natural disasters, are impacting poor populations in a disproportionate way, but also putting an unprecedented stress on the planet as a global system.

To address the global nature of climate change global solutions are required. Switzerland is a stakeholder and promoter of the key international frameworks in this regard: the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Through international cooperation, particularly through the SDC and it's the GPCCE, Switzerland proactively engages in generating innovation and providing policy solutions to deliver, together with others, on the needed transformation path for our societies and economies.

The overall goal set for the GPCCE for the time period 2021-2024 is the following:

To contribute to a world where the environment is preserved, global warming is limited to 1.5°C, the disadvantaged and most vulnerable people and ecosystems are resilient to climate change and its impacts, natural resources are managed sustainably and everyone has access to clean energy.

The GPCCE's engagement is aiming at contributing to four strategic objectives, and accordingly, is structured along four strategic components: (i) International climate and environment governance and finance, (ii) Low-carbon development, (iii) Climate-resilient development and (iv) Sustainable management of natural resources. This engagement directly contributes to the **Swiss International Cooperation Strategy 2021–24**, specifically its second objective: Combating climate change and its effects and managing natural resources sustainably⁸.

The following outcomes, defined under the four components of the strategic framework of the GPCCE, are particularly relevant in the context of the present document:

Objective 1: International climate and environment policy outcomes reflect the needs of the most vulnerable countries and people, foster fair, ambitious and effective international and national policies and mobilise additional funding.

Outcome 1.2 Effective mobilisation and use of public and private financial resources from a variety of sources is fostered.

Objective 4: Ecosystems and natural resources are preserved, restored and sustainably managed and pollution is reduced, thereby improving the health, livelihoods and resilience of the disadvantaged and most vulnerable people and protecting the climate and environment.

Outcome 4.1 Effective, equitable and transformative policies and strategies for the sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources and for reducing pollution are developed and implemented.

⁸ https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/die-deza/strategie/broschuere-IZA-strategie-20212024_EN.pdf

Outcome 4.2 Innovative and scalable pro-poor approaches for preserving, restoring and sustainably managing ecosystems and natural resources, especially forests and mountain ecosystems, as well as for reducing pollution are developed and implemented in a participatory manner.

Outcome 4.3 The importance and multiple benefits of preserving, restoring and sustainably managing ecosystems and tackling pollution for sustainable development are shared with decision makers and the public.

2.2. Strategic engagement of Sida

Sida is supporting the African Forest Forum through the Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa 2016-2021 (see reference further ahead) Support Area 1. Natural resources, biodiversity, climate change resilience, renewable energy with the three objectives:

Objective 1.1 Strengthened capacity of regional actors to work towards sustainable management and use of common ecosystem services and natural resources and conservation of biodiversity

Objective 1.2 Strengthened capacity of regional actors to work towards increased resilience against climate change and natural disasters including capacity for food security

Objective 1.3 Increased production of and access to renewable energy

The contribution is aligned to the priorities in the strategy and its operationalization.

2.3 The African Forest Forum

The African Forest Forum (AFF) was established in 2007 as a platform for stakeholders in African forestry. It operates as a membership-based association of individuals who are committed "to the sustainable management, wise use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources for the socioeconomic well-being of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment". AFF pursues the goal "to galvanise 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 a view of enhancing the relevance and contribution of forestry to the people of Africa and their environment".

The vision and mission of the AFF are:

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.

Its four key strategic objectives are:

- Build and strengthen networking among the many and varied stakeholders in forestry in Africa.
- Develop, solicit funding for, and implement specific programs, projects and activities that address already identified priority issues and opportunities in African forestry.
- Raise the profile of forestry, highlight threats to forest resources and the environment, and champion better management of African forests.
- Undertake an institutional organizational development of AFF, including its Secretariat and governance structures.

AFF operates through its members and the Secretariat. AFF is governed and managed by the following key organs:

- Members' Forum comprising all members, meeting electronically once every five years;
- Governing Council with 21 members representing African sub-regions and important stakeholders;
- Executive Committee currently comprising six members including the AFF Executive Secretary (ex-officio);
- AFF Secretariat led by the Executive Secretary.

AFF has been largely funded by international development assistance funds. Starting with and initial support in 2009, Sida has been funding AFF work almost throughout to the present day. The SDC support to AFF was initiated in 2010. The funding modalities have been programmatic rather than institutional or organizational: Sida and the SDC have been supporting two separate, yet complementary, thematic programmes, which have included a sharing of administrative costs of the AFF. Taken together, the long-term support of both development agencies represent the greatest part of the AFF funding. In addition to the SDC and Sida funding, targeted funding was made available to AFF by international organisations on specific TORs for technical and policy work, e.g. by FAO, UNFF, African Union, AfDB, ECOWAS, SADC and others. Also, some work has been conducted jointly with the hosting institution of the AFF Secretariat, ICRAF, the World Agroforestry Center of the CGIAR network. This additional funding has represented only a small part of the budgets/incomes of AFF as an organisation.

2.3.1 The SDC-funded programme

Since November 2010, the SDC, through the GPCCE, has supported the AFF in its overall mission to contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the people of Africa and the environment they live in through sustainable management and use of tree and forest resources. SDC has provided support to AFF, focusing on the development of the forest/climate change nexus in semi-arid areas (Sahel belt), the woodlands of West, East and Southern Africa and in West Africa. SDC's initial support was targeted towards the establishment of links between sustainable management and conservation of forests and climate change, as defined in the Climate Change Programme of AFF.

The SDC-funded programme, initially entitled the **African Forests, People and Climate Change Programme** has had an overall objective of reference for the three phases of the SDC support: **To build capacities and skills of stakeholders to address adverse effects of climate**

change and take up opportunities that come with climate change through better management and use of Africa's forests and tree resources in various landscapes in ways that will enhance livelihoods, national economies, sustain biodiversity, improve the quality of the environment and contribute to the global efforts to contain climate change.

The SDC support has contributed to the AFF Climate Change Programme (CCP established in 2017 as a working group of AFF) enshrined in the AFF Programmatic Approach Programme Area 3 (see annex 1): “Contribution of forests and trees to environmental health”, which strives to further develop the forest/climate change nexus considered key for Africa’s future development. The overall objective of the AFF-CCP is **to enhance the role of African forestry to help the people adapt to the effects of climate change in various landscapes in ways that will improve livelihoods, sustain biodiversity and the quality of the environment, as well as to strengthen the capacity of Africa’s forests to adapt to climate change and to contribute to mitigation efforts.** This will be achieved by the strengthening of the AFF in ways that foster an independent and objective analysis of related issues, promote capacity building and advocacy, and offer advice on all relevant policy and technical issues related to forests and climate change.

The **overall purpose** of the programme is to better understand how forests and trees and the people who depend on them in the various African landscapes, respond to climate change and variability.

Four specific **objectives** have guided the implementation of the programme. These are:

1. To strengthen capacity of African forestry stakeholders in adopting best practices that integrate both adaptation and mitigation options in response to the impacts of climate change and variability to biophysical and social systems in different landscapes
2. To enhance national forest governance by strengthening the capacity of African stakeholders to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives related to forestry
3. To promote entrepreneurship opportunities and technologically efficient means for value addition in African forestry, including those related to climate change that enhance livelihoods, national incomes and employment
4. To strengthen AFF’s institutional capacity in creation and sharing of relevant forest and tree-based knowledge and information as basis for improved decision making.

The Swiss contribution has focused on strengthening the bases for policy and advocacy, capacity building and skills development; and on the promotion of the learning, knowledge generation and information management. Overall, the funding has been aiming at strengthening the AFF both programmatically and institutionally, including its network of collaborating actors.

The envisaged overall time frame of the Swiss contribution is 2010 to the 2022, with the third and last full operational phase, launched in early 2018, being a consolidation and phasing out period to ensure appropriation of the established mechanisms by multiple stakeholders, a condition for longer-term sustainability.

The SDC Support to AFF was evaluated twice:

- (i) External Review of Phase I of Swiss Support (November 2011 to December 2014)⁹ carried out in mid-2015 and
- (ii) External Review of Phase II of Swiss Support (Jan 2015-December 2017)¹⁰ carried out in fall 2017.

2.3.2 The Sida-funded programme

Sida has cooperated with AFF since 2003 and financed AFF since 2010 and this project is a continuation of previous intervention 2014-2019: Strengthening Sustainable Forest Management in Africa, evaluated as MTR and final evaluation^{11,12}. The current AFF intervention has a comprehensive logical framework: Appendix 6 The Project Logical Framework: Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa, proposal submitted to Sida 2019.

The overall objective of the AFF intervention supported by Sida titled “Strengthening Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems for Sustainable Development in Africa” and its Theory of Change is to generate and share knowledge and information through partnerships in ways that provide inputs into policy and decision-making options and capacity building, for improved forest management that better address environmental protection to contribute to poverty eradication in Africa.

The intervention has five components, eight interlinked objectives and twenty expected outcomes on an overall level as follows:

Component 1. Sustainable management and use of land-based ecosystems with the preservation of biodiversity;

Objective 1: To identify and promote opportunities for protecting and sustainably managing the forest resource base on the continent as well as the supply of its ecosystem goods and services.

Component 2. Climate change and ecosystem services

Objective 2: To improve knowledge and capacities of African stakeholders in responding to adverse effects of climate change through better management and use of forest ecosystems and trees outside forests.

Component 3. Renewable energy

Objective 3: To examine the potential for production and use of liquid biofuels in Africa as a means towards developing green and circular national economies

Component 4. Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Objective 4: To enhance national forest governance by strengthening African capacity to effectively participate in multilateral environmental processes, and mainstream and implement decisions from them into their national policies and activities

⁹ [Default \(admin.ch\)](#)

¹⁰ [Microsoft Word - AFFSupportSDCPhaseII_ReviewFinal_01.11.17 \(admin.ch\)](#)

¹¹ End Evaluation Strengthening Sustainable Forest Management in Africa A projected implemented by African Forest Forum, 2019, Sjöholm.H, Dr Z. Teklehaimanot, F.Gatere.

¹² MTR Strengthening Sustainable Forest Management in Africa, A Project Implemented by African Forest Forum, final report 2017, Niras Indvelop Sweden AB B.Tengnäs, M.W.Karuri,

Component 5. Strengthening AFF as an institution.

Objective 5a: To strengthen the capacity of the Knowledge Management and Communication (KM&C)

Unit in managing and sharing of information

Objective 5b: To strengthen the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Unit to effectively support AFF activities.

Objective 5c: To strengthen the Finance and Administration (F&A) Unit for improved management of financial and administrative functions. Objective 5d: To improve overall governance and oversight on AFF activities.

In addressing these five components, AFF seeks to influence and facilitate organizations (governmental and non-governmental) and individual stakeholders to take actions that lead to improved forest management in ways that would eventually strengthen sustainable development in Africa. This will be done through promoting socially inclusive approaches and measures for protecting, planning and sustainably managing the forest resource, and supply of ecosystem goods and services on the continent (Component 1), catalysing research and development on the relationship between climate change and forests, trees, forest ecosystems, and people to strengthen and deepen understanding on the relationship (Component 2), and on renewable bio-based energy options dynamics. (Component 3).

The project approach also includes facilitating capacity development of African stakeholders on forest planning and management (Component 1), on climate change resilience (Component 2), and on participating in and addressing concerns from global forest related discourses (Component 4); in addition to strengthening mechanisms for knowledge brokerage to broader constituencies of influence, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting on impacts of project outcomes for organizational history and learning (Component 5).

3. Goal and objectives of the evaluation mandate

The **goals** of the mandate are:

- 1) To evaluate the achievements of the two AFF programmes financed by the SDC and Sida respectively (outcome level) and the complementarities and synergies between the two, with a particular focus on the respective last phase of the two programmes.
- 2) To evaluate AFF's own programmatic approach overall (see annexed programme structure): the specific and overarching results, and the programmatic coherence.
- 3) To evaluate AFF's present institutional, organizational and financial sustainability, as well as its development potential and options.

The **objectives** of the evaluation are:

- To assess the significance of the Swedish and Swiss contributions regarding the advancement of the main objectives set out in the funded programmes and the AFF programme areas.

- To assess the complementarity of the outcomes of the Swedish and Swiss contributions and how these contribute, combined, to the AFF overall institutional mandate.
- To assess the transformative changes induced by the Swedish and Swiss contributions on AFF as an organization/institution and as a network, as well as on boundary partners.
- To assess the effects and impacts of the AFF programmes at network, country and local levels, and the ability to respond to rapid changes in ecosystems and social systems.
- To assess the outreach and impact of AFF knowledge products within its network, on the African continent and beyond.
- To assess organizational, institutional, hosting and funding aspects of AFF regarding longer term viability.

3.1 Evaluation questions based on the DAC criteria

Relevance

- What have been the needs and demands of the pre-defined target groups, has the programme addressed these needs and demands?
- Have the main goals and the objectives of the AFF been relevant throughout in relation to the missions and the objectives of the SDC/GPCCE and of Sida's regional strategy¹³?
- How far has the AFF work been aligned with broader sustainable development frameworks, such as the Agenda 2030 (2015) or the Paris Declaration on Climate Change (2015)?
- How did the contents of work evolve over the years? Is the content of the work, the membership/network approach and the theory of change of the AFF still relevant when considering the priorities of African countries, and the realities of target groups and forest environments?
- How is AFF working in a programmatic way? Is the set-up, with two main programmes (financed by SDC and Sida) contributing to a broader, AFF programmatic approach relevant?

Effectiveness

- To what extent have the objectives (outcomes) of the SDC- and Sida-funded programmes been achieved?
- To what extent are there overlaps, complementarities and/or synergies which may have positively or negatively influenced achievements? What has been the effective outreach of AFF through its membership approach?

¹³ Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa 2016-2021 [Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa 2016-2021 - Government.se](https://www.government.se/press-releases/2016/06/strategy-for-sweden-s-regional-development-cooperation-in-sub-saharan-africa-2016-2021)

Efficiency

- In what way is the membership and network approach of AFF efficient for the achievement of set objectives (of the SDC/Sida-funded programmes, the AFF programme)?
- Are the approach and work modalities efficient in respect to the costs or are there more cost-effective ways to achieving results?
- In respect to transparency and accountability, is there adequate collaboration and regular reporting in place?
- Is the two-layered programme approach (SDC and Sida-funded programme, and overarching AFF programme) efficient?

Impact

- Are the intended effects of AFF, supported by SDC and Sida, being realized overall?
- What has been the impact of the AFF work on livelihoods, sustainable forest management and forest landscape restoration?
- What has been the outreach of AFF? Which are the target groups that benefitted from AFF action?
- What are the lasting policy outcomes at regional and country levels that can be linked/attributed to AFF action?
- What are the intended and unintended effects of the AFF on beneficiaries, AFF network members, boundary partners, and national institutions, others?
- To which institutional and system changes has the AFF contributed to, at different levels (regional, national, sub-national)?
- To what extent has the AFF induced transformational change, both at the level of local partners and beneficiaries, and within its own membership-based community?

Sustainability

- What is the likelihood that/ to what extent will the effects of the AFF be maintained after a phasing out of the SDC and Sida-funded programmes?
- Can results of AFF be maintained in the longer term or are there needs to adopt other approaches in the near future?
- How far has the AFF managed to generate ownership and commitment within its community, and among representatives of national organisations and institutions (academia, administration, NGO, private companies?)
- Has AFF managed to position itself as a reference or partner in the international policy arenas (at regional, continental and global levels) which are relevant to forests, environment, climate change and development?
- In alternative to official development assistance, what are funding models with potential for AFF in the future?

The list of questions is non-exhaustive and should be complemented by the evaluators. In the inception report, questions should be better defined based on available data and feasibility.

3.2 Expected recommendations

Based on the evaluation questions above, the evaluation team shall provide its conclusions and recommendations on:

- AFF as a network: ways to strengthen its mandate, outreach, visibility and partnerships as well as impact and sustainability.
- AFF possibilities to build alliances with other organisations such as ICRAF, CIFOR, Academia or international initiatives on forests and landscapes, to become stronger and better established.
- AFF Knowledge products and actions for capacity building and policy advocacy: How to ensure demand-orientation? how to increase uptake and adoption?
- AFF positioning and contributions to forest related policy dialogues at national and international levels, as well as to ongoing forest and landscape initiatives on the African continent.
- AFF governance, organisational set-up and programmatic approach: How to ensure an effective and streamlined organisation and network?

4. Approach and Evaluation Process

The evaluation will be conducted by a team consisting of two consultants, with one acting as the team leader. SDC or Sida resource persons could join the team as a peers (to be decided upon availabilities)¹⁴.

The team leader has an overall responsibility for the entire evaluation. s/he shall:

- coordinate the process, and take responsibility for the quality of the results and the products
- manage the planning, the implementation and possible adjustments of the evaluation process with the SDC/GPCCE and Sida
- lead the evaluation team, supervise the work done and facilitate exchanges between the evaluation team members in order to reinforce mutual learning
- be responsible for the elaboration of the inception report which summarizes first results of the document analysis (incl. previous project evaluation reports)
- lead the field mission (visit to Kenya)
- be responsible for the elaboration of the draft and final evaluation reports

In complementarity with the second consultant:

- Provide the methodological framework (including an evaluation matrix): A particular attention will have to be given to the two individual programmes (SDC and Sida) and the overarching coherence of AFF engagement.
- conduct interviews with the the SDC and Sida staff, partners in Switzerland and abroad as well as with resource persons

¹⁴ The SDC and Sida reserve the right to compose the evaluation team taking into consideration individual offers that are deemed to be particularly appropriate and relevant for the complex set of tasks.

The above list is not exhaustive and the consultants may suggest other activities deemed important for the accomplishment of this mandate.

When and where relevant, the consultants will share specific tasks according to their respective areas of competence.

5. Deliverables

- An **inception paper** summarizing the main findings of the preparation phase (document analysis and first set of interviews with SDC, Sida and AFF staff). This report shall further include the planning of a field trip to Kenya, additional methodological information and main sources/references. It should not exceed 10 pages (excluding annexes).
- A **debriefing** of the preliminary findings will be organized with the t SDC/GPCCE and Sida (virtual), after the field trip (if effective – else tbd).
- The evaluation team will deliver a **draft report** to the SDC/GPCCE in accordance with the agreed time schedule, taking into account the comments, received during the debriefing(s). The SDC/GPCCE will immediately share the draft report with Sida.
- On acceptance, the report will be shared with AFF and relevant partners, to correct possible factual errors and address possible clarification needs.
- A **meeting** for the discussion of the draft report will be held between the consultations and the SDC/GPCCE and Sida, with the view to elaborate an overall appreciation of the evaluation. This will include a discussion on the lessons learnt and recommendations. The SDC/GPCCE and Sida will decide in due time on the format.
- The **final evaluation products** are:
 - a report which analyses and synthesises the elements resulting from the evaluation process - a PowerPoint presentation (max. 15 slides) featuring the evaluation frame, methodology, process and findings

The quality of the final report is expected to meet the highest international standards. The findings, conclusions and recommendations should be thorough and based entirely on proven evidence. They should be the result of a methodical approach based on a complex systems' perspective. Structurally, the report should follow and cover the five defined evaluation areas. Major references (sources) should be systematically mentioned.

The final report shall be drafted in English, and should not exceed 30 pages (excluding the executive summary and annexes). It shall comprise the following sections:

- Table of content
- Acronyms and abbreviations
- Executive summary (maximum 3 pages)
- Background of the mission and applied methodology
- Key findings and lessons learnt
- Conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation
- Annexes

The SDC/GPCCE, in consultation with Sida, reserves the right to request changes in the structure of deliverables or the inclusion of additional information. Nevertheless, the international consultant has the full ownership of the report; s/he is free to express her/his independent assessment.

The evaluation is ending with a joint management response provided by the SDC/GPCCE and Sida. It shall contain a general assessment of the conducted evaluation, as well as a statement of the SDC's, and Sida's, position(s) regarding the conclusions and recommendations presented in the final report.

6. Required qualifications

The following specific qualifications are required from the two consultants (in complementarity):

- Knowledge and expertise in interdisciplinary thinking and cross-cutting analysis for strategic orientation
- Verifiable expertise (through education and work experience) in sustainable forest management, food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Knowledge and verifiable expertise through work experience in international development cooperation
- Knowledge and verifiable expertise on relevant multilateral institutions and Rio Conventions, as well as global climate change initiatives and approaches (Paris Agreement, GCF)
- Several years of work experience in the African context (West and Sub-Saharan Africa)
- Knowledge and work experience with Research institutions and governments
- Proven experience in managing evaluations, either as an independent consultant or within an organization. State-of-the-art skills in evaluation methodologies (OECD/DAC standards / system evaluation)
- Ability to manage complex processes involving a multitude of stakeholders in a multi-cultural environment
- Experience as team leader of project/programme evaluations
- Willingness to contribute to a team effort
- Sensitivity at enhancing learning processes
- Excellent analytical skills
- Excellent English language writing and presentation skills

Furthermore:

- Geography: At least one national from an African state (West Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa)
- Gender: A mixed team (F/M) will be preferred

The consultants will be requested to confirm their independence regarding the evaluated programmes and organisation (AFF) and that they are free from any conflict of interest

related to this evaluation. They should not have been involved in the design or the implementation of any activities related to AFF.

7. Timeframe

- **April 25, 2022:** deadline submission of the financial and technical offer (in English)
- **Mid/End of May 2022:** contractual arrangement
- **June:** desk study and first interviews with selected resource persons
- **End of June/Mid-July:** Inception Report and agreement on evaluation matrix and possible adjustments, limits and major issues of the evaluation
- **Field mission:** TBD
- **Debriefing on preliminary findings with SDC/GPCCE and Sida (virtual):** Shortly after the field mission
- **End of August:** delivery of draft report:
- **Mid-September:** Discussion of draft report (virtual):
- **End of September:** Final Report
- **TBD in October:** Presentation of report to a broader audience of SDC and Sida staff

8. Management and Supervision

The international consultants will sign a contract with the SDC/GPCCE. The responsibility for the management and supervision of the evaluation will rest with the SDC/GPCCE (Pierre-André Cordey, email: pierre-andre.cordey@eda.admin.ch), which will consult closely and regularly with Embassy of Sweden Regional section for development cooperation (Anna Tjärvar anna.tjarvar@gov.se) throughout the evaluation process.

9. Reference Materials and annexes

Documentation lists, as well as a lists of possible interviewees, will be prepared by the AFF staff, the SDC/GPCCE and Sida.

For additional information on the project, please consult the following website:

<https://afforum.org/>

SDC/COR 3/2022

Annexes to these ToR:

- General Terms and Conditions General Terms and Conditions of Business (GTC) of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) for Mandates (Type A and B)
- Form to submit an offer – Financial Offer Type B
- Evaluation Policy of the SDC

PROPOSED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

The purpose of presenting AFF's programme in this new structure (see figure below) is to show how the institution logically addresses its strategy and goals, and the many challenges and opportunities related to the forest and tree resources of Africa. At the centre of all is the commitment to promote sustainable management of these resources. 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) is the focus of Programme 6 and, finally, Programme 7 focuses on Information and impact assessment. Naturally, there will be aspects that cut across these areas (e.g. gender, youth and marginalised groups issues, contributions to the SDGs, etc.) or projects and activities which will have components related to more than one programme.



Annex 2. Detailed Reviews of Sample Documents

Documents fully reviewed include:

- (Twelve) reports on training symposia in eleven countries in 2021 on *Understanding and Mainstreaming into National Forestry Policies, Plans and Actions of Decisions from Global and Regional Climate Change Related Processes* (A. Oteng-Yeboah, E. Chagala-Odera, & P. Galega for the summary report, 2021);
- *Enhancement of African national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global change policies and initiatives* (FOKABS, 2020);
- *Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global change policies and initiatives in Eastern and Southern Africa* (C. Dlamini, 2020);
- *International Dialogues, Processes and Mechanisms on Climate Change: #08 of A Compendium for Professional and Technical Training in African Forestry* (L. Mujuru & D. Makanji, 2019);
- *Training module on effective engagement of African delegates in international multilateral processes* (A. Oteng-Yeboah, 2016); and
- *African participation in international forest processes*. Policy Brief No.1 2004 [sic] (J. Ruhombe, B. Taal, & R. Persson, 2005).

Comments on training symposia in eleven countries in 2021 on Understanding and Mainstreaming into National Forestry Policies, Plans and Actions of Decisions from Global and Regional Climate Change Related Processes

The reports on the training symposia in 2021 cover very broadly the multilateral agreements affecting forests, the overall objective of the training webinars being “to strengthen the capacity of the African forestry stakeholders to effectively engage in multilateral environmental processes that relate to forestry, as well as mainstream decisions from them in their forestry related national policies, these plans and activities, as an effective way of contributing to the achievement of national environmental, social and economic goals.” (quoted from the Summary Report on Sub-Regional Training Webinars for Anglophone, Lusophone and Francophone Africa, p. 6).

While the 11 reports have not been reviewed in great depth, our light reading of the material, including the summary report synthesizing the results from all of the sessions, shows a marked improvement from the earlier materials reviewed. We are especially pleased to see what appears to be, overall, a well-devised negotiation role play. We note with satisfaction that the questions the students were asked to consider in the aftermath of their negotiating experience, including:

- What were the challenges in the negotiations?
- How did you resolve the contentious issues?
- In a real situation, how would you have prepared for the negotiations? and what would you do differently?

We have not had access to any further teaching notes than what is included in the reports so it is unknown what the parameters of the negotiation were, but consideration should be given to what the different roles of the actors would be. In a real intergovernmental negotiation academic and NGO actors would normally not engage in the negotiations themselves but would only be able to either lobby the various governmental representatives, make a “statement” during plenary sessions, or serve on national delegations and negotiate positions within those but stick to the national delegation’s instructions outside that group—similar to EU countries negotiating the EU position

within the EU coordination meeting but then toeing the line of the resulting “EU position” in the larger context.

While the regional context that has been provided for the negotiation simulation seems realistic and certainly more concrete in what it needs to accomplish than many multilateral forest-related policy negotiations, it appears from some of the student comments that there is interest in learning more about the real, very concrete and complex multilateral intergovernmental negotiations affecting forests within UNFCCC COP negotiations. A negotiation simulation using a (very simplified) version of this context could have the benefit of making UNFCCC negotiations less challenging for prospective negotiators to contemplate.

In any case, the negotiation training appears to have succeeded in focusing the trainees on their own interests in the negotiation and how to address the need for agreement in a situation of conflict of interests. We cannot assess the quality of the teaching materials but the reactions from the students that are included in the reports seem to show that they understood the problems presented in trying to achieve an agreement that addresses their own interests satisfactorily within a negotiation among a group of actors with disparate interests.

Comments on***Enhancement of African national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives***

https://afforum.org/oldaff/sites/default/files/English/English_238.pdf

and

Enhancement of national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global change policies and initiatives in eastern and southern Africa

https://afforum.org/oldaff/sites/default/files/English/English_239.pdf

Overview: These two Working Papers were published in succession in 2020, as Volume 5 Issue 3 and Volume 5 Issue 4, respectively, of the African Forest Forum (AFF) Working Paper Series. For the first, the author is cited as FOKABS, with no further information given. A search on the web shows FOKABS to be a consultancy group based in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, that appears to have a strong focus on Africa. The latter paper cites Cliff S. Dlamini as the author. It is not stated whether the writer/s of these papers are members of the AFF. The full papers are easily accessible on the AFF website and, interestingly, are the only publications that I have found on the AFF site that mention “Paris Agreement” in the title.

Given the similarity of names and the fact that the first focuses on Central and West Africa (CWA) and the latter on East and Southern Africa (ESA), I expected them to be very similar, with the only difference being the regions covered. I was mistaken in this expectation. While the former is fairly easy to follow in terms of organisation, it really does not say much in comparison with the in-depth analysis of the latter. While both have at least some untidiness and inaccuracies, the second is far more professionally produced and clearly displays much more thought and expertise in the subject matter.

Accuracy:

CWA: Unfortunately the first inaccuracy in this paper appears in its first two sentences, which state that the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015 and then that it was adopted in 2016. (It was actually adopted in 2015, with a signing ceremony and, later, entry into force, in 2016.) While this is a minor mistake, it gives the impression of some carelessness which does not bode well for the rest of the paper. There are numerous other more notable inaccuracies, such as page numbers themselves, which starts back at page 1 on what should be page 15 of the main text (not counting pp. 1-10 of “pre-text” which one might have expected to see written in small Roman numerals) and is listed as on page 15 in the List of Tables on pre-text p.5. The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 is called the United Nations Strategic Plans for the Forest for 2017-2030” on p.2 and “United Nation Global strategy on forest” on p.5.

ESA: This paper has several noticeable mistakes, such as spelling out the acronym LULUCF in the List of Acronyms (pre-text p.6) as “Land Use, Land Use and Forestry” and a reference to improving the implementation of “nationally determined conditions” rather than “contributions” (NDCs).

Both: For some reason, both papers speak of the “United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity” (“UNCBD”). For political reasons that were paramount in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity does not have “United Nations” in its title (see <https://www.cbd.int>).

While none of these mistakes make either paper unintelligible, they exemplify a carelessness or untidiness which does permeate both papers to some extent, although far more in the CWA. This can only hurt the reader’s ability to absorb the information needed.

Clarity, Content, Presentation: I find issues of **clarity** in both, although far more with CWA. My impression is that CWA was perhaps developed by a non-native English speaker as some of the

English usages are difficult to understand. *ESA* is generally much easier to read and is obviously the work of a professional, but I wonder if perhaps Dlamini utilized the help of an assistant on parts that did not require great expertise, as there are some areas that are simply sloppy, as, for example, in the Bibliography, where the 5th work cited appears under Dlamini's own name, the 6th is by a Davis, C. (*et al*), and then the 7th through 11th under Dlamini's name again (p.37). In other words, it appears that the Davis work was inserted at a later time but not inserted at the right place in the alphabetical order. A thorough proofreading of the final version would have made *ESA* stand out in professional quality. Unfortunately I cannot say the same for *CWA* as there were many other problems there.

Both papers appear similar in their ToCs, with familiar-looking sections listed in a familiar order. Both appropriately provide a Chapter on Methodology, but a significant difference appears straightaway. *CWA* notes sections labelled Desk Study and Field Study, with the Desk Study including an evaluation of data from secondary sources and then mention of a ("the") data collection tool (questionnaire), divided into 3 main sections, denoted as "Section I", "Section 2", and "Section II" [sic]. Here the lack of clarity becomes much more problematic: Section 2, which "focused on collecting information on response to Paris Agreement and related climate policies and initiatives". Information collected "included:

- Rating on clarity and coherence of related frameworks and policies, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and equitability;
- Overlap and synergy in the forest sector and related global and regional climate change related policies and initiatives;
- Knowledge gaps and skills among African forestry stakeholders in mainstreaming global and regional climate change policies and initiatives into national forestry sector; and
- The capacity gaps in reporting forest-based plans and activities.

In other words, there is little to nothing about the Paris Agreement itself in any of the bullets.

Section "II", however, "focused on information on national forest sector contribution to NDCs", including:

- Gaps in the development of national forest sector and REDD+ contribution to NDCs,
- Integrating forest-based adaptation and mitigation activities and initiatives in NDCs and,
- Lessons learned in the development and implementation of the 1st forest based NDC in Africa."

Given that NDCs are the main response to the Paris Agreement (PA),¹⁵ this attempted division is confusing and leads to confusion in the organisation of the entire Working Paper.

Under information on the Field Study, the (unnamed) author/s mention that "[t]o reduce the occurrence of biased responses, interviewers avoided leading the interviewees during the interviews (see Kvale 1996; Ammenberg 2003; Alemagi et al. 2012) and reacted in a neutral manner by not signalling or providing their preferred answers (Ammenberg, 2003)." This is unnecessary to mention as it is expected that the researcher knows how to conduct interviews. The fact that it is mentioned actually inspires less confidence in the researchers' abilities, as they do not appear to know that that is expected in any case.

Also under "Methodology" is mention of "[a]t least two journal articles to be published", "draft policy brief", and "a fact sheet to be finalized". This makes me wonder where these are as I can find no mention of them on the AFF website.

In contrast, *ESA* guides its reader clearly into its subject matter starting with the UN General Assembly (UNGA) 2008 definition of SFM (p.1), listing seven criteria and indicators for SFM (p.2), and

¹⁵ "As nationally determined contributions to the global response to climate change, all Parties are to undertake and communicate ambitious efforts as defined in Articles 4, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13 with the view to achieving the purpose of this Agreement as set out in Article 2." (Paris Agreement, Article 3)

then noting some of the most significant international processes and tools covering SFM or climate-related forest issues, including FLEGT, REDD+, and the SDGs, and other several forest-related concepts. Unfortunately Dlamini does not mention NDCs explicitly when he then states in a new paragraph that the “key elements in the context of this study are: (i) Main Substantive Elements and Commitments and (ii) Reporting, Review and Compliance”; these elements fit with an assumption that he means key elements of NDCs but he only mentions NDCs in the following sentence, in the context of LULUCF, and then spells out NDCs erroneously as “nationally determined conditions” (p.2), as I have mentioned above.

ESA’s methodology differs, too, noting a literature review, a six-day harmonization workshop “to enable all regional consultants to work on an agreed methodology,” descriptive analysis, and interviews with key informants, making use of prior distribution via email of semi-structured validated questionnaires by subject matter specialists selected from the relevant stakeholders who were then engaged as data collectors. It then states how data analysis was used to assess whether relevant national, regional and even international/global frameworks, policies and strategies fulfil Articles 4-15 of the PA. The PA implementation status of each country in other words, its NDC, is then tested against those PA Articles, and analysed for “heterogeneity” (left undefined), degree of coverage of LULUCF and REDD+, and adequacy in terms of SFM, good forest governance, FLEGT, and forest-related M&A. While there are a few problems with clarity, overall the structure of *ESA* study is much more intelligible than that of the *CWA*.

I define “**content**” here to refer to what these working papers actually tell the readers—their “findings”, in other words. As the titles indicate, the thrust of both is, at least ostensibly, to assess the state of forest governance in their respective regions of Africa in terms of how well countries in those regions are responding to the provisions they have agreed to undertake under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement of 2015—in other words, their respective NDCs—as well as other initiatives, and to comment on “enhancement”, or rather, what should be done to improve national forest governance, in selected countries in the *CWA* and *ESA* regions.

Both papers start with a contextual overview, *CWA* beginning with the adoption of the Paris Agreement and *ESA*, with climate change itself, linking this to the world’s forests by citing recent FAO figures on decreasing forest carbon stock. After their respective explanations of methodology, both studies provide profiles of the countries studied, focusing on their forest policy, but I like the fact that *CWA* also summarizes the on-the-ground conditions in the area studied, with mention of deforestation and forest degradation rates in the FAO’s 2020 FRA as well as the richness in forest biodiversity, unsustainable agriculture, and population growth, as well as mentioning legislation in Benin that legitimises traditional forest-related beliefs and activities and culturally supports forest conservation.

The “Results” chapter that forms the bulk of the *CWA* study, focuses heavily on interview data. In some cases it would have made sense to have focused more on literature, such as when the author/s report on countries’ NDCs’ status with the following:

“Field visits results revealed that 46% of the respondents opined that their countries have not yet evolved from NDC1. Respondents in Mali and Gambia were not sure if their countries have evolved from INDC while 25% supported [sic] the fact that their Enhancement of African national forest governance to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global change policies and initiatives countries are still at the INDC level (Figure 11). 27% of respondents were unaware of the subject matter while 2% reported that their countries have evolved to NDC1.” (pp.26-27/13-14)

It is unclear to me exactly what the author/s mean by “evolved” and I am not sure that the information imparted in this paragraph is worth the amount of—somewhat confused—verbiage, which of course only covers the countries visited by the researchers. My hesitancy over this paragraph is only increased by the author/s provision of a table¹⁶ showing which of the total 24 Central and West African countries have submitted their (pre-PA) INDCs and which, their “NDC1s” (p.27/14). None of the countries assessed in CWA had submitted their NDC2 or “updated NDC1” as of its publication in 2020.¹⁷

There are several other choices of wording in CWA that make the results difficult to understand. In Section 3.1.1, Assessment of Forest governance in the selected case study countries, the author/s state that “[r]espondents were assessed on” the clarity and coherence of forest policies and other aspects of good forest governance (p.8). The statement should read that respondents were “asked their opinion of”; it is not they who are being judged but, rather, the state of the forest policies *et al.* in their countries.

It is then stated that “[f]or the coherence and clarity of forest policies...in the selected case study countries, 38% of respondents expressed strong agreement for recognition of customary and traditional rights; 33% clarity and coherence in policies and laws and 31% for provisions and mechanisms for equity sharing.” It took some time to understand that what was meant was that 38%, 33%, and 31% of respondents, respectively, agreed that policy, legal, institutional, and regulatory frameworks in Central and West Africa recognize customary and traditional rights, are clear and coherent, and encompass provisions and mechanisms for “equity sharing” (left undefined).

I was left wondering if my maths education was somehow defective upon then reading that “[m]ost of them (40%) partly agreed that there was” (1) “clarity and coherence in policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks for forest governance” and 2) “recognitions and protection for forest related property rights including who has the ownership of the carbon in the countries” (p.9) given my understanding that 40% is less than half. I am bewildered as to why the text did not simply add up the expressions of agreement and state that “73% (40% + 33%) agreed or agreed strongly” on (1) and that “55% (40% + 15%) agreed or agreed strongly” on (2). The fact that the options for answering these questions included the terms “partly agree” and “partly disagree” is also unhelpful as it seems to allude to “parts” with which the respondent does not agree but without specifying them; far better, surely, would be to simply use terms such as “generally agree/strongly agree” and “generally disagree/strongly disagree”.¹⁸

My difficulty in grasping the sense of this paragraph was exacerbated by the **presentation** of the figure to which it referred (Figure 2, p.9), which presents bars showing the percentages of the 48 respondents who “strongly disagree”, “partly disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “partly agree”, or “strongly agree” on six areas about whose clarity and coherence respondents in legal, institutional, and regulatory frameworks they were asked their opinion. The first aspect mentioned in the paragraph is depicted by the third bar in the set; “clarity and coherence” (general clarity and coherence overall, I assume) depicted by the first bar, and “provisions and mechanisms for equity sharing” depicted by the sixth bar.

¹⁶ Table 4: NDC evolutions for countries in Central and West Africa

¹⁷ The UNFCCC NDC Registry cited as the source for this table includes dates of submission, which would have been helpful to have also put in the CWA table.

¹⁸ I would note that Hardcastle has also developed a helpful way of “forcing” a respondent to think about and take some opinion on a question which requires this sort of answer, by removing the mid-point “neither agree nor disagree”, under the logic that stakeholders are smart enough to lean one way or the other if faced with such a question and space to think about it, which thus provides more useful information to the interviewer and, ultimately, to the reader.

Similar problems in presentation and clarity of interview data recur throughout the *CWA* paper, with several of these issues compounded by difficulty in sifting through long and dense paragraphs (e.g., a paragraph almost a page long on p.6). Section 3.1.5 also seems confused when presenting results on a question regarding capacity gaps on reporting forest-based plans and activities relating to SDGs and NDCs at national, regional, and international level (p.24/11). I believe the confusion lies in the meaning of “reporting”, in that the working paper states that interview respondents reported that “the most frequently occurring channels that were used for reporting forest based and climate change information at national and international levels” are “the internet, the radio, local TV, and email”.

I can only wonder how local TV could be used to report “up” to the national, regional, and international levels, and I suspect that what the respondents actually thought was meant was how they receive information. Again the author/s simply do not make their questions clear so as to be able to ascertain how the respondents understood what was being asked. I get the impression that the author/s themselves were unclear about what they should be asking in this case. Presenting an annex with the full text of the questions and responses would have been very helpful for readers’ understanding.

REDD+: As REDD+ featured prominently in both studies (mentioned 45 times in *ESA* and an astounding 98 times in *CWA*) it bears mentioning here that **clarity** on the part of the author/s on the actual purpose of REDD+ was not discernible in *CWA*.

ESA: I appreciate the fact that *ESA* defines REDD+ and explains its history, albeit Dlamini’s statements that REDD+ in developing countries “is a form of instrument *meant to promote* conservation, sustainable management of forests (SMF) and enhancement of forest carbon stocks” (p.2) and his later statement that “REDD+ stands for countries’ efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation *and foster* conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks” (p.29) are not quite accurate (*my italics*).¹⁹ Nevertheless, Dlamini provides some support for these assertions by noting “[a]ctivities, carbon pools and the greenhouse gases that countries may consider in the scope of their REDD+ programmes”, from a table cited as from

Table 19: Activities, carbon pools and greenhouse gases

Activities	Carbon Pools	Greenhouse Gases
Reducing emissions from deforestation	Aboveground biomass	Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)
Reducing emissions from forest degradation	Belowground biomass	Carbon monoxide (CO)
Conservation of forest carbon stocks	Dead wood	Methane (CH ₄)
Sustainable management of forests	Litter	Nitrous oxide (N ₂ O)
Enhancement of forest	Soil carbon	

Source: FAO, 2018b

¹⁹ The exact wording in the UNFCCC Decision that first addressed the “+” in REDD+ was in the 2007 Bali Action Plan (Decision 1/CP.13), which stated that the COP:

Decides to launch a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action,...by addressing, inter alia: ...

(b) Enhanced national/international action on mitigation of climate change, including, inter alia, consideration of: ...

(iii) Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; *and the role of* conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries”. What is meant by “consideration of...the role of conservation, SMF, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries was deliberately left vague.

FAO:²⁰

Dlamini is making the point that reductions in emissions of gases from the “+” sources should be eligible for REDD+ results-based financing, although the FAO itself, in a different publication,²¹ points to the fact that “+” activities are not just for the purpose of reducing emissions but can also include increases in net emissions removals. According to this FAO work, little has been done in this area and it is not necessarily an adequately accessible source of funding for many countries, perhaps particularly for those that have already had comparatively little success in obtaining REDD payments. This is only one of the numerable weaknesses of the vast REDD machinery that have been identified by various authors.²²

Quality of analysis: I include this as a criterion for assessment here because I find analysis lacking in *CWA*. The fact that *CWA* is a research study, as opposed to a different kind of publication such as a training module, should entail some analysis of the results of the investigation undertaken. There is no real discussion or synthesis of the data in *CWA*, and certainly no profound insights, which is particularly noticeable when it is contrasted with *ESA*. For instance, the figures given in *CWA* Subsection 3.2.1., on assessment of the forest sector’s contribution to NDC, shows a large difference between the Central African countries targeted in this study and the West African target countries on whether forest programs have been incorporated into their NDCs (p.26/13). This was reported but no consideration or investigation of reasons for this is provided. It is also odd that the countries reported in this finding are described in “percentages of countries”, drawn out to two decimal places, with no transparency as to the numbers of countries included in this finding for either of these regions. Do these findings include the entire group of countries in each of the regions, only the countries that were studied in this working paper, or indeed an entirely different number?

Discussion or Conclusions chapters should make room for an analysis if none has been done before. However, the Discussion chapter in *CWA* is in effect limited to a listing of the survey findings, evidencing little difference to the findings of the other studies the author/s cite/s (PROFOR 2011, 2019; AfDB 2018, 2019) and giving no real insights, such as on the differences between Central and West African countries in whether forest programs are incorporated into their NDCs.

The Concluding Remarks chapter is generally limited to a half-page reiteration of what the Discussion chapter has already reported. For example, it lists “the most common barriers to effective implementation of forestry initiatives and climate change related policies” as “the lack of technical capacity, logistical capacity, financial capacity, political will, trained personnel, and weak enforcement, ineffective coordination within the natural resource sector and inadequate capacity in the private and public sector” (p.38/25), while the Discussion chapter listed the most common barriers to effective implementation of forestry initiatives and climate change-related policies” as “lack of technical capacity, lack of logistical capacity, lack of financial capacity, lack of political will, weak enforcement, lack of trained personnel, ineffective coordination within the natural resource sector, and inadequate capacity in the private and public sector” (p.36/23).

The Concluding Remarks then include “very specific recommendations for overcoming challenges identified in this study”: including “among others proper knowledge transfer, investment in human and financial resources, proper capacity building, education and sensitization, the need for political

²⁰ FAO. 1948-2018: *Seventy years of FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment: Historical overview and future prospects*. <https://www.fao.org/3/I8227EN/i8227en.pdf>.

²¹ FAO. *From reference levels to results reporting: REDD+ under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2020 update*. Forestry Working Paper 19. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb1635en/cb1635en.pdf>.

²² See, e.g., Mujuru, L. and D. Mkanji. 2019. *International Dialogues, Processes and Mechanisms on Climate Change*. AFF. p. 94.

will, the need for REDD+ Readiness in Gambia and Mali, and synergistic actions within relevant government institutions.” Apart from the grammatical issues inherent in recommendations that include “the need for” two of the recommendations, the list lacks anything resembling “very specific recommendations” (p.39/26).

ESA, which was published after *CWA* and therefore may have been intentionally designed to avoid some of the pitfalls of the *CWA*, includes Results and Discussion together in one chapter of ten pages, then follows it with a 2 1/2-page chapter on Conclusions and Recommendations—in other words, a chapter 5 times longer than the equivalent in *CWA*. Within this *ESA* chapter are sections on General Conclusions, Specific Conclusions, General Recommendations, Specific Recommendations, and Future Outlook. In other words, the organization is once again very clear. Dlamini’s conclusions and recommendations show more acuity, too, than do those of FOKABS; for instance, in addition to stating that lack of development and implementation of NDC in Africa are attributable to inadequate political commitment, financial resources, and technical support, he also notes inadequate integration among sectors: “That is, most countries have their instruments housed in separate government ministries and agencies (including government parastatals)” (p.34). *CWA* is completely silent on this possibility.

References: Both papers make good use of in-text citations, apart from one parenthetical in *CWA*: “(Error! Reference source not found.” [*Sic*]) (p.27/14). Aside from the small bibliographical concern I noted above with regard to *ESA*, its bibliographical entries are much easier to read than those in *CWA*, partly because they are enumerated. I would have preferred a little space between each entry; I also find the full justification in both working papers untidy and difficult to read.

Comments on *International Dialogues, Processes and Mechanisms on Climate Change: #08 of A Compendium for Professional and Technical Training in African Forestry* (L. Mujuru and D. Makanji, 2019)

(<https://afforum.org/publication/international-dialogues-processes-and-mechanisms-on-climate-change-a-compendium-for-professional-and-technical-training-in-african-forestry-08/>)

Overview: This 111-page publication is the eighth and last in this Compendium series, the others focusing on the basic science of climate change for professional and technical training and short courses; carbon markets and trade for technical and professional training and short courses; and climate modelling and scenario development. The Preface says this series grew out of a workshop in forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation held in 2012 that identified four training needs on climate change for forestry. The subject of this book(let) is, however, not one of those four and after reading it, it is unclear to me exactly who the target readership is and what their needs really are. What follows are my thoughts on some of the main achievements as well as issues I find in the booklet, loosely grouped into categories of criteria to be used in evaluating its overall quality.

Content: I am impressed by the amount of detailed information contained, and I imagine that this is one reason for the small font. I wonder, though, how much of the detail is relevant for the target readership as I have quoted above. This is part of the reason why it is not clear to me who the target readership actually is. To be frank, I think that the target readership mentioned in the Preface might find it quite a bit easier to absorb information in the areas of the book that are more important/relevant to them if some of the detail were omitted. For instance, there is a great deal of information in the beginning of Chapter 2 (pp.8-10) on the founding and organisation of the WMO. I am not sure this is needed at the level of training that is needed for most of the readership/trainees envisaged.

I greatly appreciate the list of twelve “Challenges for Africa” to be able to benefit from REDD+ (Section 6.6.2, pp.94-95). It would be good to see this discussion synthesised into the discussions of REDD+ in other chapters, and/or even some analysis of how the author of this chapter itself sees this list as compatible with their statement that “The focus of REDD+ on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests provided an important framework and a strong foundation for SFM” in the chapter summary just below that list (p.95). I am disappointed, too, though, that the problems for dry forests in getting REDD+ funds, questions over the cost-effectiveness of MRV, and who the benefits of measuring forest carbon emissions go to, do not appear in this list of challenges, and qualifying challenges associated with REDD+ as only applicable to “local communities” (p.94) is incorrect.

The Executive Summary states that “delivery methods include interactive lectures; group discussions; question and answer sessions; brainstorming and case study activities” (p.xvi). I am not sure what is meant by “interactive lectures” and I find that most of the “activities” and “exercise questions” at the end of chapters require a great deal of outside knowledge rather than understanding of the information presented in the chapter.

Accuracy: Accuracy is problematic in spots. For instance:

- There is a reference to “the adoption of the Paris agreement at the Conference of Parties meeting (COP) in Morocco, in November 2016” (p.4).
- There is a reference elsewhere to the “Kyoto Protocol, 1992” (p.39); the KP was adopted in 1997, while the quote referenced in the text is from the 1992 UNFCCC.

- In that chapter on the Kyoto Protocol (p.40), it is stated that “[d]eveloping countries (Non-Annex 1 Parties) had no emission reduction targets for the first commitment period as they were recognised as being more vulnerable to the adverse impacts of CC, prone to rising sea levels, desertification and droughts”, without any acknowledgement here that they were not responsible for the vast majority of emissions.
- The author’s claim that “[t]he compliance system established by the Protocol is one of the most comprehensive and rigorous systems among all international treaties” suffers, in my opinion, from a bit of overenthusiasm. Indeed, section 4.3 on emissions trading reads a bit like an advertisement for it, noticeably lacking any figures at all on what benefits forests have received from the two types of carbon trading mechanisms discussed.
- I don’t understand this sentence at all: “Under this [offset trading] scheme, there is a reduction in GHG emissions to compensate for offset emissions made elsewhere, e.g. by using wind or solar energy.” Is there perhaps a word missing? i.e., “...to compensate for OR offset emissions made elsewhere...”? The way it reads is opaque to trainees trying to understand carbon offset schemes.
- There are claims made in various places that are not necessarily supported, such as, when speaking of COMIFAC, “The ecosystem-based adaptation methods have been implemented through rational use of forest resources, thus facilitating adaptation.” I would have liked to know more about the claim of rational use of forest resources in that region. This may well be taken up in other parts of this compendium set of which this book forms #08, or in other AFF publications, but I think anyone reading this book as a stand-alone publication will be left wondering about this statement.
- Use of language also affects accuracy and understanding. There are several examples of word usage that makes a statement less intelligible, such as, under “Activity 6.1, Brainstorming”: “Africa lacks the capacity for CC change negotiations. Critically assess the efficacy [sic] of this statement”. The term “agenda items” is used in “under various agenda items of the Convention” (p.23) when I believe what was meant must have been “Articles”. Less unintelligible but still untidy is the reference to the LDCF as the “Least Development [sic] Country Fund” in the glossary, with no additional attempt to spell it out elsewhere in the text, and the statement that “Ethiopia INDC was rated as sWufficient” (p.104).

References: Much of the information presented and many of the bibliographic references need updating, certainly in 2022 but even when this book was published in 2019. For instance, it is odd that after a chapter on the UNFCCC itself and then one on the Kyoto Protocol there is no chapter on the Paris Agreement, certainly the most important current agreement on climate change; there are only bits and pieces about it spread about in other chapters. It appears that perhaps some of this material had been written previously but only published in 2019.

Similarly, the statement that GEF provides funding for activities in only four areas (climate change, biodiversity, pollution of international waters and depletion of the ozone layer; p.99) is outdated; currently (2022) there are currently six main focal areas: biodiversity, climate change, chemicals and waste, international waters, land degradation, and sustainable forest management. Again similarly, in a section on the IAF (Chapter 7, p.101), why are only instruments that are over twenty years old—the 1992 Rio Declaration, Forest Principles, and Chapter 11 of Agenda 21, and the 1997 and 2000 outcomes of the IPF and IFF, respectively, listed as instruments the principal functions of which the IAF is supposed to carry out, with neither the 2007/2015 UNFI nor the 2017 UNSPF mentioned? I can only think that that sentence was written not much later than 2001.

The book needs more, and more current, figures. For instance:

- There is only one quantitative claim about the effectiveness of carbon markets in reducing GHG emissions, which is not even specific to forests, and it is from 2012: “More than 1300 certified VCS projects have collectively reduced or removed more than 134 million tonnes of GHG emissions from the atmosphere (Peters-Stanley et al., 2012) (p.70). Why not take a much more up-to-date figure from the VCS website itself? Currently there is this (2022) statement: “Over 1,808 certified VCS projects have collectively reduced or removed more than 966 million tonnes of carbon and other GHG emissions from the atmosphere” (<https://verra.org/project/vcs-program/>).
- Another example: “The focus of REDD+ on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, [sic] provided an important framework and a strong foundation for SFM” is stated but no support given.
- It would be desirable, too, after seeing the statement that “Ghana was selected in February 2010 to host a pilot REDD+ project through the FIP administered by the World Bank” (p.93) to know, in 2022 if not indeed in 2019, how it fared in that pilot project.

Also perhaps under “references” is the question why the authors of the different chapters are not denoted at the beginning of each chapter, as is more usual in my experience. There is a long list of contributors at the back but no indication of which chapters they contributed to. It would increase transparency to have this information straightforwardly presented and readily available because it seems clear that different chapters have different authors, which I believe is part of the reason for my inability to discern a clear logical flow.

Style and presentation: I find this book frankly difficult to access, particularly if it is targeted at “forestry-related educational and research institutions and the training needs of civil society groups and extension agents who interact with local communities and the private sector” as it says in the Preface. There are several aspects that make it less accessible than it could be:

- With regard to the hard copy version in particular, the font is very small and light in colour—appearing almost grey rather than black—and the book is printed on semi-glossy paper, making it hard to read. There are many very long paragraphs and the pages have little white showing around them, so it is easy to get lost in the text. In addition, the pages have glossy orange edges about 3mm wide on which it is not easy to write, so there is little room for making marginal notes. On the online version these difficulties are moot, but of course not everyone has easy access to the internet or stable connectivity with which to read the book online.
- As for presentation, there are numerous untidy spots that should have been cleaned up by the printer, such as formatting issues (e.g., alignment of bibliography entries), misspelled words such as “sWufficient” noted above, syntax or grammar problems, a word sometimes missing or a letter missing from a word (“modul”, p.16), more than one misnomer, and rather careless formatting (“**Agriculture**”, p.67).
- I’m not a huge fan of shortening “carbon” to “C”. Perhaps it was done to save room but it makes entities that are well known sound unfamiliar, such as the World Bank’s “Forest C Partnership Facility (FCPF)”(p.30). This again makes the book less accessible for the readership. I am not familiar with any other entity’s materials, official or unofficial, that shorten “carbon” to “C” throughout as this one and others in this compendium series do.
- The glossary of acronyms (pp. viii-xi) is excellent, but in addition I would suggest spelling out the acronyms the first time they appear in the text as well. Some are spelled out; many are not; for example, “CMP” is not, nor is it mentioned that the acronym “COP/MOP” refers to the same entity. One statement refers to “the authority and guidance of COP to the KP (CMP)”;

this is nomenclature. There is, too, inevitably the possibility that some acronyms will be neither spelled out the first time nor listed in the glossary; such is the case with R-PP (p.92).

- Section 4.5, “Limitation and challenges of the Kyoto protocol” is actually about limits on CDM projects in Africa (7 out of 7 bullets).
- Similarly, Section 7.4.1, which begins by stating that “[t]here are various opportunities available for Africa countries” focuses on MEAs rather than on African countries in the three bullets that follow that statement:
 - “i) Clustering approach can be used to maximise the benefits of MEAs and resolve obstacles of overlaps, fragmentation, and proliferation. Grouping/clustering involves merging, or integrating agreements according to different variables to improve and make international governance system more robust.
 - ii) Provision of clear environmental and performance indicators to measure effectiveness of MEAs,
 - iii) Establishment of funding targeted at Africa to harness both public and private funds for AFOLU and REDD. These funds are available from various source at the international level for example the World Bank, and regional development banks.”

Organization: I do not find the structure of this book easy to understand; I cannot discern a logical flow of topics. The names of the first four chapters suggest a chronological order but Chapter 2 (entitled “The First Multilateral Organisations Tasked to Address Climate Change”) begins with the WMO and ends ten pages later with the 2015 Sustainable Development Summit and then the 2017 UNSPF, with a difficult-to-follow organisation of descriptions of various organisations. Why, for instance, is the UNCCD discussed in the subsection on the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Chapter 3 (p.14)?

It appears that the chapters were written by different authors (suggested by the list of contributors in the back) so there is some overlap between them, with the same or related topics being taken up in multiple chapters, such as on the UNFF and its products:

- In Section 2.1, “Introduction”, the UNFF is mentioned in a list of “The First Multilateral Organisations Tasked to Address Climate Change” (p.8);
- In Subsection 2.5.1.iii, under “The statement of forest principles”(1992), a rundown of the evolution of the UNFF and its predecessors is given (inaccurately, actually, as the evolution of multilateral forest talks into the UNFF began under the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was an outcome of Agenda 21 in Rio, not the Forest Principles) (pp.15-17);
- “The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030” is discussed in Section 2.6 of this chapter on “The First Multilateral Organisations Tasked to Address Climate Change” despite the fact that it was neither one of the “first” nor a “multilateral organisation” at all; this section also makes virtually no mention of the relationship of the UNSPF to the UNFF and the four Global Forest Objectives of the NLBI/UNFI, nor to the fact that it was negotiated within the UNFF (p. 20-21);
 - ⇒ The IAF is also mentioned for the first time in this section but with no mention of what it is and how it is related to the UNFF (p.20);
- Subsection 5.4.2. on “The Non Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI)” of 2007, notes that the NLBI is “also commonly known as the UNFI” with no explanation here of what “UNFI” stands for. The NLBI was actually *renamed* UNFI by the UN General Assembly in 2015 (p.70);
 - ⇒ The IAF is described, slightly better this time, in this subsection as well (p.70);

- The Chapter Summary for Chapter 5: states that the (1992) “Non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, also known as the forest principles” is a “product of UNFF”. This is incorrect and marks some confusion between the 1992 Forest Principles and the 2007/2015 NLBI/UNFI (p.71);
- Section 6.3., “Processes and mechanisms - African forestry in regional, continental and global conventions and institutions and resources for implementation” (p.79-86) describes in some depth some of the multilateral processes that affect forests, but then 7.2 takes up “History of MEAs” and other agreements and processes such as what came out of Rio 1992 and the IAF yet again. It is unclear why there are so many separate discussions dotted around the booklet.
- 7.2, “History of MEAs”: states that the IAF “encompassed UNFF as UN’s principal forest policy making body, the CPF (led by FAO), the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, inputs and support from regional and sub-regional processes, and evolving financial arrangements” (p.100). For the sake of accuracy, I note that, according to the UN, the IAF has five main components: the UNFF and its Member States, the UNFF Secretariat, the CPF, the UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN), and the UNFF Trust Fund. See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/international-arrangement-on-forests/index.html#:~:text=The%20International%20Arrangement%20on%20Forests,and%20the%20UNFF%20Trust%20Fund> (p.100-101).
- Section 7.3, “7.3 NAPAs, NAMAs and INDCs” (p.102-104), is probably the most difficult section to understand structurally. It starts with 7.3.1, on 2001’s NAPAs, follows with NAMAs from 2007, then jumps to INDCs agreed in 2013 (with no mention that they became full NDCs with the Paris Agreement in 2015, nor any mention of NDCs in the glossary, nor any acknowledgement of the relationship between I/NDCs, NAPAs, NAMAs, or NAPs, then jumps back to discussion of the “National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)” agreed in 2010, with no mention of the fact that NAPs built on the experience of NAPAs.
- I very much appreciate Section 7.4.2, “Challenges”, on constraints that limit progress in implementation of the policies/strategies or action plans in Africa. However, this should not be the final chapter text in the book. A conclusion is needed to bring together all the different strands of discussions, although perhaps more important is to put this or something similar at the book’s beginning, to explain why the book is needed and why it covers what it covers. The Executive Summary is inadequate for this.

Regarding Chapter 3, on the UNFCCC, I wonder how useful it is to the target readership of this book that it goes into great detail about provisions that have been superseded and/or strengthened over the 30 years since it was adopted? While it is of course necessary to be aware of international agreements and commitments to address climate change and its effects and their genesis, particularly insofar as they influence what happens on the ground, a different way of organising this material might be more useful.

For instance, after a historical overview of the evolution of international attention to climate change, perhaps organising the book overall according to specific themes and sub-themes and their evolution over time—rather than according to treaty, process, or organisation—might make it clearer to readers what is important for them to know. Such themes, or chapters, might include, *inter alia*: the position of developing countries and vulnerable populations vis-à-vis climate change, as well as with regard to forests; the evolution of international agreements on forest-related climate change mitigation and their implementation; the evolution of international agreements on forest-related climate change adaptation and their implementation; and, most importantly, the current expectations and resources available at the international level for protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing forests.

I also think bullets containing key information might be easier to learn from than lengthy, difficult to read paragraphs dense in details. It would also be very helpful to have an index, in the hard copy version at least, to make it easier to find or relocate specific information. This book could be better used as a reference that way. Thus, rather than expecting trainees to absorb everything in it at the same level of understanding, it might be better to produce a work with two distinct parts: the first giving trainees a basic understanding of the information on multilateral processes related to forests and climate change that is most relevant to them, and the second part providing some of the material from the book as it currently exists for reference when further information is needed, with specific information made as easy to find as possible. Ideally, reference to specific documents could also include a link to the document, where available, where the first mention appears in the online text. (Similar links could be provided to sections and subsections in the book itself where listed in the ToC.) I am impressed to see that some of the chapter bibliographies contain numerous links to works cited, but there could be more, such as for “A history of climate change activities.” in WMO Bulletin No. 58 (on p.7) or “Tenure in REDD – start-point or afterthought?” (on p.72). The link to this is readily available: <https://pubs.iied.org/13554iied>.

Concluding Thoughts: It is obvious that a great effort, by a great many people, was put into developing this book. It now needs to be updated, organised more logically and accessibly, and made more useful overall. There must be many people in Africa who need to be able to access information about forest and climate change-related instruments and processes at the international level; this book should help them understand what is expected and what they may do to increase capacity and resources for compliance with them. I have not had access to any figures as to readership or training programmes based on this book, but I believe that more usefulness is possible.

DSD comments on Training module on effective engagement of African delegates in international multilateral processes, Oteng-Yeboah A. A. (2016).

https://afforum.org/oldaff/sites/default/files/English/English_149.pdf

Style and presentation: The TM was an interesting read for me and pitched at the right language level, I believe, for the readership, but the admonishments, such as at the end (the last two annexes), are rather condescending, even if necessary in the author’s opinion. There are numerous repetitions of same or similar text, including the admonishments. For instance, the author twice gives the full text of the four Global Forest Goals from the UN Forest Instrument (formerly the Non-Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI)). The text could be tightened up a lot by removing repetition.

Content and references: The TM was written in 2016 but it feels like a (somewhat) updated version of a much older document. The references, apart from two, are from around 1999-2001 or earlier. For instance, reference is made to achieving “the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” (verbatim) twice. There is no need to mention the MDGs at all now (nor to spell out SDGs more than once). He only mentions the Paris Agreement once, simply saying it was “recently adopted”, with no substance. He also lacks any specifics about REDD+.

On the reference list itself, apart from being rather old, it includes some good negotiating texts but I do not get the impression that he used them in the TM, as they include what I would call “theory” which he does not use, to the detriment of the TM. I also don’t know why he includes so many references to articles about NGOs—perhaps they were necessary for the older work that I am suspecting this is an update of? I cannot see a need for such material in a TM for prospective negotiators in the kinds of negotiating fora AFF is focussed on, nor does he discuss them in the text.

Clarity and document structure: The author’s intentions are somewhat unclear to me. For instance, there is a lot of information in the section on CPF members, which is somewhat repetitive of information given elsewhere and is not totally relevant in a publication for training negotiators, nor presented in the most useful way, in my opinion. I wonder again whether this was information from an earlier document that was perhaps inserted here because it was easy to do. It would perhaps have been more useful if the author had delineated ways in which negotiation is undertaken in each and for what purpose, as contexts for negotiation needed differ considerably, as the author acknowledges, and not all CPF members have similar influence over forest policy and practice. A table, in an annex, displaying categories of information about the different international conventions and forest-related international organisations—particularly those in which African negotiators are most likely to find themselves negotiating—would be more useful as a quick reference when needed and also for understanding the differences, overlaps, gaps, and synergies between them. Perhaps even a separate document with this or somewhat expanded information on each would be more useful.

Gaps: On negotiating and negotiations themselves, the author’s attempts to present a “generic” structure of forest-related negotiating fora results in a good bit of unclarity and even inaccuracy, given that the various fora are so different in many ways, not least in structure. Not all of them have COPs; the UNFF is not a “subsidiary body” in the sense that the author refers to subsidiary bodies immediately above that mention; chairs of negotiating groups are not “negotiators” when they are chairing—they are required to be neutral, not present their country’s positions). It would have been much more helpful to provide more content on how the fora differ rather than try to provide a generic model which does not fit with most of the fora for which African negotiators should perhaps focus most of their efforts, given the resource constraints they face. It appears that this author has

some personal experience with the CBD and perhaps the UNFCCC but much of his information about other fora is more remote and less accurate.

Given that the author is not a political scientist or student of international relations (information about the author is lacking in the TM itself, which should be corrected for credibility), he does not have the vocabulary that I would have expected to see in a TM about negotiating, such as a term for when negotiations fail because one or more parties “can walk away”. He should avoid overly using academic jargon, such as perhaps “zone of agreement” or “BATNA”, for a non-academic readership, although these might actually aid the reader’s understanding of the point of negotiation, but use of the correct terms—and definitions of terms that a reader may not immediately understand—would be helpful. For instance, terms the reader may hear elsewhere, such as the non-agreement status quo or default, the use of “carrots” vs. “sticks”, need explanation, as well as terms that he uses but does not define, including, for example, “caucus”, “coalition”, “intervention”, and “consensus”. I would have liked to see a list of terms used in or about negotiating, with brief definitions, for readers to use as a reference when needed, along with the glossary he helpfully provides that spells out acronyms.

Overall, I would have preferred a TM with much more detail about the point of negotiating. It is not simply to arrive at an agreed compromise but also, and more importantly really, to get the most you can of what you (your country) want in the agreement. The author gives no attention to this competing goal of getting what one wants in the agreement. Negotiating is a balancing act, ultimately depending on how much one values an agreement at all. This is how large delegations of highly skilled negotiators can muscle through agreements that benefit their countries far more than they do countries with weaker delegations. This is where “tactics” and “strategy” come in, terms that the author mentions but does not explain nor explain how to use. This leads to some inaccuracy in this TM in the author’s view of “how to behave” in negotiations. Taking up everyone’s time with multiple lengthy statements, in courteous and sometimes even very flowery language, is a tactic that is sometimes very useful for getting what one wants, as has been shown by delegates who do this successfully, but the author does not acknowledge this in his admonishment to be brief and keep ever in mind the goal of compromise and consensus.

Conclusions: In general, this document contains many bits of useful information and “tips” for negotiators, but I do not feel they are laid out in a clear logical order slowly building up a complete picture in order to build a negotiator’s understanding and confidence on what is required. On smaller points, the whole document needs some proofreading for grammar, punctuation, and syntax (and spelling—gavel is written as “gable” in one instance). I feel that the professional standard of training needed by the readers was not fully met by this author; I believe that what is needed is someone who has a more complete grasp of what the negotiations he discusses entail, both at the “theoretical” or generic level as well as in the specific contexts of those fora that are most significant in their influence on forest policy and practice at the national level.

Having taught courses in international negotiating, I would find this module difficult to use for actually training prospective negotiators. I gather it is more for prospective negotiators themselves than for training events, but the skills required for negotiating would be better learnt in a group training environment—in the same way that when learning a language, it is useful to have someone to talk to in it.

The training module was accessible online but I believe the information needed for prospective negotiators or even negotiators who may desire additional information could be more “accessible”; that is, with more relevant information disseminated in a different way, including through group training, with a manual for trainers on how to do this as opposed to a module just for trainees

themselves. There is much room for improvement and as well as for updating with more relevant information on negotiation on international forest policy, practice, and funding.

DSD comments on *African participation in international forest processes*. Policy Brief No.1 2004 [sic], Ruhombe, J., Taal, B. M. & Persson, R.

http://afforum.org/oldaff/sites/default/files/English/English_18.pdf

This Policy Brief is 17 years old (2005) but is valuable for providing a baseline against which AFF's efforts and the results of its efforts in this area can be judged. It shows some of the history of AFF as well, including a main purpose for why AFF was formed, along with the history of its Technical Support Team (TST) whose purpose is to prepare African negotiators for international forest-related negotiations. In particular, it exists to strengthen Africa's voice through bringing African countries together to develop a common position both before and during meetings—in particular, UNFF5, which this article mentions specifically.

The PB is very short, only four pages, but its information is useful and did not need to be longer. The content is very well laid out, with a clear, logical structure. It is very readable, with the language pitched at the right level for its readership.

It mentions a study, *Observations on African Participation in International Forest Processes*, at the AFORNET website. The website does not exist. Is this 2005 article simply an updating of the "Observations" article? It is the same authors, but they do not make clear in the text how this report relates to that one and I cannot find the one mentioned.

Its purpose was to

1) identify "some key issues" for enhancing African participation in the international processes:

- low and inconsistent participation of African countries;
- little influence over the outcomes of the processes, as a consequence of the problematic participation;
- challenges in mainstreaming (implementing) the outcomes at national level;
- many overlapping international and regional initiatives requiring substantial human and financial resources for adequate coverage; and
- inadequate participation by some important players in the forest sector, particularly the private forest industry.

2) provide some explanation for each of the issues and what has been done to address them.

Reasons given included, *inter alia*:

- Lack of funds to support delegations with expertise and continuity;
- Lack of preparation/technical capacity;
- Lack of regional consultations to develop a common African voice for negotiating;
- Lack of communication of the key outcomes of international processes at the national and subnational levels;
- Too many, often related and sometimes overlapping, proposals for action coming out of international processes for the limited financial and human resources available for "mainstreaming" (implementation), thus requiring prioritisation, and streamlining to avoid duplication of tasks, which requires assistance; and

3) report on recommendations for further work to address them that emanated from a meeting in Nairobi, 2005, which was held to help with African preparations for UNFF5. Recommendations included, *inter alia*:

- Establish a Technical Support Team and get UNFF accreditation for it under the African Union;
- Put in place a mechanism to continue continent-wide dialogue on forest issues; and
- Ensure that the private sector is represented among the experts mobilizing a coordinated African voice in the international processes.

What interests me is to ascertain the extent of progress in addressing the issues that were identified at that meeting and in this brief over the intervening years up to the present.²³ As I have mentioned elsewhere in my general comments on AFF resources, it appears that there have been fluctuations in the level of attention given to this subject since 2005, with little that I have so far found having been done during the third phase of the SDC/Sida projects under this present review.²⁴

²³ The policy brief is cited elsewhere as dating from 2004 but this cannot be the correct date as it describes the 2005 Nairobi preparatory meeting. It is clear from the text that it was written sometime between April and July 2005.

²⁴ One effort to quantify evidence on whether African participation has increased has been simply to count interventions from a sample of AFF member countries and African groupings as reported from a sample of UNFCCC COPs, IPCC approval sessions, and UNFF sessions.

Annex 3. Members' reasons for joining AFF and their benefits from AFF

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
25-34	F	MSc	Nigeria	E	Research	2021	To be impacted and also make impact.		
25-34	M	BSc	Malawi	E	Forest Officer	2015	To be in a team of Forester who are trying to manage and encouraging the community to sustainably use Forest resources for the benefit of the world at large.	It is doing a lot more than I thought it would.	
55-64	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	Academia	2012	To join other forest professionals in developing the African forest to provide sustainable ecosystem goods and services to African people	The trainings organised for AFF members and other stakeholders are apt and relevant and adequate. The materials (e.g. books, factsheets, etc) developed by the AFF and available on the website are very useful.	1. Participation in AFF training 2. Opportunity to provide consultancy services to AFF 3. Meeting other forest professionals through AFF meetings and trainings.
55-64	F	PhD	Ghana	E	Academia		Networking with experts in different disciplines		Training in climate change mitigation and adaptation
45-54	F	PhD	Tanzania	E	Academia	2012	Knowledge sharing, networking, gaining experience concerning African forests	I managed to receive consultancy, publish my research works	I managed to receive consultancies form AFF, publish my research works , team work
35-44	M	PhD	Norway	E	Research	2016	I wanted to be affiliated with the AFF	From the periodic meetings, calls and workshops	Not Applicable
55-64	M	MSc	Zambia	E	Forest Officer	2015	To be part of the forestry professionals, advocating for sustainable forest management and contributing to peoples' livelihoods.	I have learnt a lot and gained knowledge especially on forestry and climate change related issues. My connection to AFF has actually inspired me to get into research and study more on forestry and climate change	AFF has offered me a study fellowship for the research I am currently doing.

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
35-44	F	MSc	Nigeria	E	Student	2017	I wanted to broaden my cope as a forester	I have been able to read some important about forestry	Giving out relevant information about forestry all over the world for young foresters to learn
35-44	M	MSc	Benin	F	Forest Officer	2017	Contribute to African forest management and address climate change, improve my knowledge	I think this way because : 1. there is no transparency in selection of participants to attend training or meetings this last year. We are just informed that a training or meeting is going to take place in this country without telling how participants are invited. 2. there are very few activities for members from French countries	1. M scholarship for African students in Bern University in Swiss 2. Grant for attendees to the XIV world forest congress in South Africa
45-54	M	PhD	Canada	E	Student	2015	Promote forestry in the continent	Practicing Criteria for members	1. Recognition 2. Information
45-54	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Research	2013	To work jointly, experience sharing and learning.	I have worked my PhD with AFF sponsorship presented on the 10th AFF's Anniversary, participated on the World Forestry Congress in Durban South Africa in 2015: pre-workshop training and main congress plenaries with AFF sponsorship and I have learnt a lot through these. I have also participated in several webinars and gained lots of knowledge.	AS in 14.
55-64	M	MSc	Kenya	E	Academia	2010	To be able deliver on my mandate of training, research and outreach at my University	Have been able to get good material for my work and have participated in training workshops and conferences by AFF	Getting research outputs and publications from different areas of specializations in Forestry. When I was a member of the Executive Committee of Forestry Society of Kenya, AFF facilitated us with a workshop on Forest Certification and started the Forestry Association of East Africa.

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
18-24	M	BSc	Liberia	E	Research	2014	To build my career		To get experience and my career is built
35-44	M	BSc	Ghana	E	Student	2021	To educate others about the importance of forest to humanity and the world as a whole.	Most of the virtual meeting, I normally tools screenshot of some of the presentation delivered. it has really helped me as wood technology student.	1. insight on online lecture per Africa forest and strategic plan to increase the forest 2. article from journal
65+	M	PhD	Senegal	E	Consultant	2017	AFF is the forest forum endogenous for Africa	AFF targets the relevant issues African countries need	Get relevant information on sustainable forest management, biodiversity improvement and fight against climate change
35-44	M	PhD	Sierra Leone	E	Academia	2015	As a Forester, I feel I belong to such a forum. AFF also have many opportunities for early and mid-career foresters	AFF provide leaning and training opportunities for every African scholars in forestry and related discipline. AFF bring on board and train participants from various work of life. They help build career of young foresters like myself.	AFF gave me my first international experience where i met different people across African AFF has enhance my academic and social networking through workshops and training.
45-54	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	Academia	2015	To support research, learning and knowledge exchange in forest ecosystem conservation and climate change adaptation	AFF publications and conferences are well aligned to my intent of joining as member	Free access to publications and knowledge resources in forests and climate situations in and around Africa
65+	M	MSc	Senegal	F	Consultant	2019	To improve my skill on monitoring and assessment	I have to make a study with AFF which shows me that AFF is a good structure on monitoring and assessment	To meet many people throughout Africa To receive funds for a workshop in my country
65+	M	MSc	Zambia	E	Research	2007	To share forestry knowledge in Africa		Literature sharing

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
35-44	M	BSc	Nigeria	E	Forest Officer	2016	Forestry sector development in Nigeria and Africa	The organization have not been doing well to Nigeria in their planning and being carried along, though the meeting held in 2017 or 2018 by the AFF officer from Kenya was successful but since then, there is no communication proper. Most of the people trained by AFF in Nigeria were all retired now by their years of service or age. This is one of the issues discussed then with the Kenya woman that came to Nigeria on AFF matters in the country.	Exposure to various online training which is not enough
45-54	M	MSc	Italy	E	Research	2014	Because it is a important source of relevant information and contacts	I would like to have more opportunities to interact with other members, especially through online exchanges and collaborations	I can find members and experts in several countries. But I haven't used those contacts very much to date
55-64	M	PhD	Mali	F	Academia	2005	To get information	I got relevant information and documents	Documents on forestry and forest science
35-44	M	MSc	Ethiopia	E	Student	2021	To create partnership with forestry professionals and strengthening my professional capacity.	I'm getting information and have got different platforms to meet forestry professional	- short term trainings and different links announced through the webpage of the AFF
55-64	F	PhD	Cameroon	E	Academia	2019	For scientific interchange and updates on Forest issues in Africa and the world at large	I could have loved to be invited from time to time for workshops and conferences	The online virtual exposes, though not always properly followed up as a result of network failures have been very educative
55-64	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Academia		improve and develop the current African Forest management and utilization conditions sustainably	The AFF has improved the capacities of the AFF forest professionals and stakeholders of member States in forest related issues like CBF, sustainable forest management, value addition and marketing of forest and NWFP, climate change issues, and SDG, ...	knowledge management experience sharing

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
25-34	M	BSc	Zambia	E	Other	2020	AFF is my main inspiration when it comes to climate change and environmental protection awareness	All the AFF meetings I have attended have equipped me with more data on climate change and environmental protection	I have managed to teach what I learnt at the workshops to my fellow colleagues here in Zambia ,in collages and schools I managed to sensitize the communities and villages about climate change
65+	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	Academia	2008	Transited from AFORNET; conducted part of the 'Lessons Learned....' studies that lead to formation of AFF	AFF is the only veritable voice for African forestry; it does far more than the training and research role that AFORNET/AAS did	Provides a platform for reaching specialists and exploring any issue in African forestry. It assists effective African participation in global forestry discourse
55-64	M	Cert	Benin	F	Commercial Company	2015	In 2015, I was invited, as a wood association manager, by the Beninese forest administration to be part of a delegation to an AFF workshop in Abuja	Before our membership in AFF, our association had no contact, no compass in matters of forestry although we are a very committed group to fight against the anarchic exploitation of the forests. With AFF we have received a lot of capacity building, in terms of sustainable forest management through workshops, this allowed us to be validly involved in decision - making in defining forest policies in our country, the birth of The Federation du Bois in Benin in 2021 was thanks to the knowledge acquired during the AFF workshops (one of the Atelier AFF in Abuja in 2015 on forest governance in Africa).	With AFF we are very informed of the new benefits in terms of private forestry, in short, the Beninese administration consults a lot the wood federation on several questions related to sustainable forest management. We are proud and thank you
45-54	M	MSc	RCA	F	Forest Officer	2016-2017	Forest development and sustainable management, and REDD+	In terms of adaptation to climate change and sustainable management and also agroforestry	AFF brings together several forest experts from different languages; -AFF organizes workshops, training seminars and launches NOs, many reviews or calls for experts value each other
25-34	M	MSc	Sudan	E	Academia	2019	Relevancy and knowledge	I found anything that I wanted	Training and knowledge distribution

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
65+	M	PhD	Senegal	F	Forest Officer	2007	Building African forestry system	Funded projects to establish networks. Training Communication	I had the opportunity to participate to the selection of the best projects submitted
55-64	M	PhD	Uganda	E	Academia	2016	Networking		I have been able to contribute to new knowledge through research consultancies supported by AFF. I have also been able to network with colleagues on issues of mutual interest.
25-34	M	BSc	Zambia	E	CSO	2022	Been a forester by profession, I saw it prudent to associate myself with an international organization such as AFF which presents a forum to provide a platform and create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues. Also to provide me with a platform I can network and interact with other foresters in the profession.	This is because I feel AFF doesn't engage young people in its programs, especially young enthusiastic forestry graduates like myself, who are eager to contribute positively in driving the agenda and objectives of AFF. I feel AFF should try and bridge the gap between the old, experienced forestry professors and the young, unexperienced foresters like myself so that, with the guidance and mentorship of the experienced colleagues to the younger ones, the future of AFF will be in safe hands.	Have benefited from various virtual meetings and training workshops AFF has been having. I find most of them to be very resourceful and beneficial.
25-34	M	MSc	Kenya	E	CSO	2021	Sharing knowledge and skills for ecological and ecosystems restoration and solutions for environmental challenges+ Deforestation/Afforestation in Africa/Africa forests.	This has been a short time to know much of AFF experience.	I have come to know much about ecological and ecosystems restoration; particularly during my hosting Make A Difference WEEK 2022+ 2 days Conference in Kenya with nil budget. I had to use my personal resources/funding to carry out responsibility given for the purposes of exposure to the world.
25-34	M	BSc	Nigeria	E	Student		To network with other foresters in Africa and contribute to the conservation and development of forestry in the continent		

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
45-54	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Academia	2013	To get information	I am engaged more in ecotourism and do not have time to read books and articles about my academic profession, to update my knowledge AFF provides me updated news.	
35-44	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Academia	2019	To make collaboration with continental Research.	I have been expecting frequent research calls that engage several Research across Africa. Even though there are some calls, it's lower than my expectations.	Some alerts on training, scholarship, and conferences.
65+	M	PhD	Mali	F	Forest Officer	2008	To promote forestry in general , specifically forest management in West Africa (Mali)	I have more than 35 years of experience in forest management and forestry teaching in Mali, Niger and Mauritania	- Training in forest management; - Capacities building in forestry, in natural resources management etc..
55-64	M	MSc	Ghana	E	Retired	2002	To learn from other professionals and share experiences	AFF sponsored me to many seminars and conferences where I learned a lot from other professionals	Helped me to develop my skills in project management. I have also improved my negotiation capacity
35-44	M	MSc	Nigeria	E	Research	2022	Research purpose and better knowledge about the forest, and also working opportunity	Well, I guess I just started, looking forward for better things to come	More knowledge about the forest and also opportunity to listen to experts in the field of forestry
65+	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	CSO	2010	Opportunity to learn and share knowledge on African forest conservation and management	AFF has consistently taken up emerging issues in the world's forests and ensuring the African forests issues are brought to the international discussions	Opportunity to relate with other African foresters and the provision of latest ideas at the international arena.
45-54	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Research	2019	To conserve forest.	AFF a research and education forum	#14 above

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
55-64	M	PhD	Mozambique	E	Consultant	2010	Networking with other practitioners on issues related to sustainable management of forests in Africa.	AFF is always striving and managing to keep abreast of latest practical approaches to managing trees in and outside forests.	
45-54	M	Dip	Niger	F	Commercial Company	2016	To acquire knowledge and share my experiences in forestry	My main activity is focused on the sustainable management of forest where I have a lot of experience and I will manage a lot	Strengthening my capacities in the fields of sustainable management of forest. , My integration in more networks and international platform aimed at the same objective
55-64	M	PhD	Ghana	E	Research	2017	Help promote sustainable forest management	It appears most of the activities of AFF are inclined to the dry land forest AREA	Forest management knowledge
45-54	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	Forest Officer	2013	To learn more about forest management and contribute my own quota to the of knowledge in Forest management	I have not been able to attend any tangible training either online or physical through the Forum	
55-64	M	MSc	Kenya	E	Commercial Company	2013	Interest in how an African Forestry organisation operates	AFF is too academic faraway from real challenges in the field. AFF is not linking adequately with practical organisations. Many of the topics, TORs and studies are already done by other organisations	Efficient organising of papers and workshops. But too many of them are very specific topics. How do they serve to solve practical forest challenges
45-54	M	MSc	Zimbabwe	E	Consultant	2012	Professional engagement with forestry fraternity	Provision of current forestry information, articulating contemporary issues and providing skills upgrade in critical areas.	Access to information. Upskilling on scientific and technical writing.
25-34	M	MSc	Ethiopia	E	Student		To know the state of forest in Africa and conserve forests for sustainable use , to gain training related to forest conservation	Because I have got many scientific publication and manuals regarding forestry	getting scientific publications

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
25-34	F	MSc	Nigeria	E	Academia	2021	To join the community and network of foresters towards restoring African's forest ecosystem and combating climate change.	I'm a new member, though with the few months spent have learnt, hoping to get more experience.	I had the opportunity to benefit and attend the webinar organised by AFF
25-34	M	PhD	Rep. of Congo	F	Research	2019	African network in forest		
25-34	M	MSc	Burundi	F	Research	2021	Integrate a forest-saving Research and professional community to share and gain up-to-date skills	Because often the target groups are experts, executive and government people. Young Research are not being involved as required.	1. Natural resources and forest-based information 2. Up-to-date progress of the AFF
45-54	M	BSc	Kenya	E	CSO	2015	Getting updates of Africa forest emerging news, and also learning from other forest actors	I have been able to learn some forest protection policies from other forest protection actors	Always learning what is emerging on forest sector in Africa
35-44	M	MSc	Uganda	E	CSO	2018	Gaining forestry experiences/news and exposure	AFF is one of the major forestry platforms across Africa and the globe	News and representing African forestry worldwide. I feel represented as a member.
35-44	M	PhD	Bots-wana	E	Academia	2022	I am a research on forestry related issues and forest conservation. This organisation is relevant to the work that I do.	It extensively deals with conservation of forests.	So far none as I am still new
35-44	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	Research	2019	Career progression and opportunities	My major area of specialisation is forest product utilisation which majorly involves wood products. However, AFF has only provided little or no opportunity in this area for me	Discovering new trend in forestry
25-34	M	BSc	Zambia	E	Research	2016	To learn about forest which fundamental for climate change and protection for catchment area and the environment	Am well informed	It's given me knowledge in environment

Age	M / F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Join	Main reason for joining AFF	View of AFF	Benefits of AFF membership
25-34	M	MSc	Sierra Leone	E	CSO	2018	Capacity building in the protection and sustainable forest management in my country	I have had the opportunity to participate in the M&E training for AFF members and governing council's stakeholders	M&E Training
35-44	M	MSc	Tanzania	E	Forest Officer	2020	Sharing forestry issues and access job vacancies offered by AFF or other forestry institutions working with AFF	I have been able to see job vacancies announced by institution working with AFF and I have been receiving emails for seminars conducted by AFF	- Updates on seminars - Networking
35-44	M	MSc	Chad	F	Research	2016	Contribution to learning and participation	Any decision was Taken in advance, our region is not well considered as priority and not attending any meetings only associated with some few on-line sessions or training sessions	Opportunity for job or recruitment nothing else
55-64	M	PhD	South Africa	E	Academia	2010	Knowledge sharing in forestry	The research component is weak, as AFF mostly concentrated on consolidation of past information and capacity building on policy related issues	1) The postgraduate funding for research projects 2) Consultation for knowledge products development in different areas of forestry
35-44	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Research		To get scientific documents and to share my experiences.		

Annex 4. Members' Views AFF Topics and Events and General Comments

Age	M /F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Joined	Topics / events to be covered in more depth	Topics / events covered too much	Further general comments
25-34	F	MSc	Nigeria	E	Researcher	2021			
25-34	M	BSc	Malawi	E	Forest Officer	2015	Much has been covered already	Frequent communication helps us to stay active and updated on current events and activities under way	
55-64	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	Academia	2012	Topics on forest restoration and conservation of African forest ecosystems	Topics on climate change mitigation and adaptation has been given much attention	
45-54	F	PhD	Tanzania	E	Academia	2012	covid 19 and forest management	Nil	Nil
55-64	M	MSc	Zambia	E	Forest Officer	2015	Climate Change, Management and use of forest ecosystems	Actually there is need to increase coverage for all the topics. Time is not enough!	There also need to include topics on GIS and Remote sensing to help in monitoring and determining deforestation and land cover changes
35-44	F	MSc	NIGERIA	E	Student	2017	using geo-spatial information to improve forestry	none	sometimes I find it very difficult to access some of the journal articles
45-54	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Researcher	2013	Climate change and Forest dynamics	webinars	Encourage diversity of members' participation from different African countries in physical workshops and conferences to present papers. I have observed concentrations in Kenya and west Africa during such happenings.
55-64	M	MSc	Kenya	E	Academia	2010	Silviculture and management of dryland forestry. These are areas where forestry can be expanded.	None	I only want to congratulate the leadership of AFF and ask them to engage more directly with the Forestry Institutions in all African Countries so that their output especially in terms of research findings and policy briefs are consumed by the expected beneficiaries.
18-24	M	BSc	Liberia	E	Researcher	2014			I wish AFF to give opportunities for us to get master

Age	M /F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Joined	Topics / events to be covered in more depth	Topics / events covered too much	Further general comments
35-44	M	BSc	GHANA	E	Student	2021	strategies to get the politicians involving to campaign against land degradation deforestation		AFF should Accredited some of the institution in Africa offering wood science and forestry programme
65+	M	PhD	SENEGAL	E	Consultant	2017	forest and climate change; forest and sustainable development	none	AFF is very needed for African development
35-44	M	PhD	Sierra Leone	E	Academia	2015	Climate change and Forest Management	NO	AFF should try bring more young scholars onboard because they will lead tomorrow
45-54	M	PhD	NIGERIA	E	Academia	2015	Forest governance and management across African regions	None	AFF should create a link for members to share their works and publications and support members to spread the readership. Also AFF should allow members use the AFF logo to promote their local events in forests and climate change communications
65+	M	MSc	Senegal	F	Consultant	2019	Private forestry		To translate into French all the publications of AFF
35-44	M	BSc	NIGERIA	E	Forest Officer	2016	DEVELOPMENT OF NON TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS TO COMBACT HUNGER, POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA	NIL	AFF IS A BODY OF EXPERTS IN FORESTRY SECTOR IN AFRICA, THERE IS NEED TO TRAIN THE NOT TOO EXPERIENCED OFFICERS AS YOU HAVE BEEN DOING IN THE PAST BUT NOW WITH OFFICERS HAVING NOT LESS THAN 5 YEARS REMAINING IN SERVICE SO THAT THE KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRE CAN BE TRANSFERRED BEFORE THE FELLOW RETIRES FROM SERVICE
45-54	M	MSc	Italy	E	Researcher	2014	Participatory Forest Management	None	
55-64	M	PhD	MALI	F	Academia	2005	No	No	Congratulation for publishing more in French language !
55-64	F	PhD	Cameroon	E	Academia	2019	Forest restoration measures in the tropics	Face-to-face communications by inviting members once in a while could be encouraged	I just wish to congratulate the officials of this Forum for efforts put in to keep SFF moving.

Age	M /F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Joined	Topics / events to be covered in more depth	Topics / events covered too much	Further general comments
55-64	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Academia		improve SFM and sectoral integration in all members states	0	so far so good
25-34	M	BSc	Zambia	E	Other	2020	Environmental awareness	Nil	Nil
65+	M	PhD	NIGERIA	E	Academia	2008	Engagement with grassroots practitioners in forestry—ultimate users of products and outputs of AFF. 2. Engagement with non-forestry actors and sectors that influence forestry outcomes		
45-54	M	MSc	RCA	F	Forest Officer	2016-2017	It is fine	It is fine	English speakers are favoured over French speakers; some material is not provided in French. The countries of Sahel are more favoured than the forest countries of the Congo Basin at times. There are 1 or even 2 forest countries which are ahead of the others but AFF does not recognize them as leaders in sustainable forest development, significantly ahead of others
25-34	M	MSc	Sudan	E	Academia	2019	Forest and climate change mitigation	Forest governance	Forests for environmental
55-64	M	PhD	Uganda	E	Academia	2016			I have not interacted sufficiently with AFF on issues 16 and 17
25-34	M	BSc	Zambia	E	CSO	2022	Training events, especially youthful seminar/ workshops should be held and covered in more depth.	None	Am glad to be given this opportunity to provide feedback on AFF. I hope my concerns raised will be attended to. Regards!
25-34	M	MSc	Kenya	E	CSO	2021	Not sure	Not sure	I would like to participate in any capacity at AFF
45-54	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Academia	2013	Ecosystem and wildlife management	No idea	No
35-44	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Academia	2019	Annual research review		
65+	M	PhD	Mali	F	Forest Officer	2008	Forest sustainable management, Climate change		AFF is very useful for African forest engineers and has done good job!!!

Age	M /F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Joined	Topics / events to be covered in more depth	Topics / events covered too much	Further general comments
55-64	M	MSc	Ghana	E	Retired	2002	Projects financing	Everything is perfect	The group has been very useful and has improved my knowledge in forestry and project management
35-44	M	MSc	Nigeria	E	Researcher	2022	More on conservation of biodiversity		
65+	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	CSO	2010	Forest and Low emissions development activities	None	Not Applicable
45-54	M	PhD	Ethiopia	E	Researcher	2019	yes	no	Time punctuality is needed
55-64	M	PhD	Mozambique	E	Consultant	2010	The restoration of degraded and degrading Miombo woodlands		Keep the AFF flagship flying, very important for the continent
45-54	M	Dip	Niger	F	Commercial Company	2017	Training workshops	Manuals	Strengthen the involvement of the private sector and civil society structures in all the activities of AFF
55-64	M	PhD	Ghana	E	Researcher	2017	Training	Guest lectures	Increase the training for MSC and add PhD training
55-64	M	MSc	Kenya	E	Commercial Company	2013	Practical solutions and linking with other organisations	Academic approaches	
45-54	M	MSc	Zimbabwe	E	Consultant	2012	Climate change resilience and project funding access	Nil	The AFF has grown in impact in recent years.
25-34	F	MSc	Nigeria	E	Academia	2021	1.The issue of women's participation in forestry and forest policies. 2. Forest Deforestation and Degradation 3. The issue of climate change	None	None
45-54	M	BSc	Kenya	E	CSO	2015	REDD+ policies	None	I always appreciate the information I get from AFF
35-44	M	PhD	Nigeria	E	Researcher	2019	Forest product utilization, especially wood		More career opportunities for researchers from Nigeria
25-34	M	BSc	Zambia	E	Researcher	2016	Climate change	Nil	Also impact of forest to water sector

Age	M /F	Qual	Country	Lang	Role	Joined	Topics / events to be covered in more depth	Topics / events covered too much	Further general comments
35-44	M	MSc	Tanzania	E	Forest Officer	2020	Carbon trade and agroforestry	None	I would like to recommend forestry services offered by AFF to the community at large. It is highly important to keep on sharing information and looking for more networks from other institutions overseas to learn more from them and strengthen linkages among forestry institutions
35-44	M	MSc	Chad	F	Researcher	2016	Member forum should be physical attendance at least 2 person per region in every forum	Webinars, virtual meeting	Every AFF region should be represented by 2 person and nomination for region rep should be 2 year renewable 2 time
55-64	M	PhD	South Africa	E	Academia	2010	Forest ecology and management	Climate Change Advocacy	It is a good avenue or platform for identifying collaborators. Capacity building for professionals at postgraduate level should be increase in NRM even if it means link up with RUFORUM. Links with SRO can also promote forestry research

Age 55 – 64, M, Cert, Benin, French, Commercial Company, joined 2015

Topics that you would like to see covered in more depth and/or new events or types of communication	Topics you feel are covered too much for which coverage could be reduced , or events or types of communication that you feel could be reduced in number	Please add any further general comments you may wish to express here.
<p>Yes, 1/ It is necessary that the end promoting the creation of the professional association of traders of forest products of the sub -regions -African ss through the implementation either of the federations of wood at the level of the countries where or Inter- profession in the said countries, these are in action which impacts the exploitation of forests then the training of and the sharing of knowledge can only reach a critical mass BDE people but also the most indicated people .3/ Help associations for the popularization of knowledge AFF 4/ Perform training on the price of the wood market in Africa, the step of information on the price of wood on the destination markets, in Africa and harmonize the sale prices of the wood to avoid the brading of wood, wood has become a rare commodity but economic operators in the trade in the no longer generate a sufficient margin to reinvest in the reforestation. 5/ Help in setting up sustainable wood supply chains at countries 6/ Creation of Focal points displayed public/ private at the country level</p>	<p>Yes, we have talked about a lot of sustainable forest management, climate change, and others. Let's be very much more forestry and the facilitation of access to funding for wooden private sector for compensatory reforestation action. Taxation on wood Several taxes on wood completely crap the beneficiary margin of private operators This exacerbated the rhythm of exploitation of large -scale forests in search of profit on volume. It takes reasonable differential taxation for wood according to sound level transformation</p>	<p>Thank you AFF I would like the National Federation de Bois du Benin FENAOEF/F-B to be technically assisted and paid financially for the sharing of accident knowledge during training. We have limited means</p>

Annex 5. AFF Secretariat Cost ²⁵

AFF Secretariat	Sida			SDC			Total		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Executive Secretary	15,861	46,967	47,944	78,976	46,851	48,959	94,837	93,818	96,903
Senior Programme Officer				96,809	74,495	82,716	96,809	74,495	82,716
Senior Prog. Officer, shared	12,381	31,576	37,737	45,646	31,576	37,736	58,027	63,152	75,473
Programme Manager	19,780	79,527	79,255				19,780	79,527	79,255
Programme Officer		24,731	64,168	103,689	67,141	64,119	103,689	91,872	128,287
Knowledge Management Specialist							0	0	0
Comms. Specialist, shared	5,061	14,843	14,952	19,796	14,843	14,952	24,857	29,686	29,904
PMER Specialist, shared	4,592	6,014	13,373	21,928	6,014	13,513	26,520	12,028	26,886
Other annual staff costs	5,927	49,660	45,798	115,837	114,907	80,209	121,764	164,567	126,007
Retirement contribution	4,758	13,968	14,275				4,758	13,968	14,275
Medical & life insurance	97	15,301	8,387				97	15,301	8,387
Staff travel	9,349	14,191	19,841	39,499	17,645	6,917	48,848	31,836	26,758
Office rent and admin services	25,150	49,163	79,720	140,349	77,442	90,651	165,499	126,605	170,371
Audit, evaluation, retreat, etc.	8,305	16,910	9,927	21,914	17,970	13,408	30,219	34,880	23,335
Senior Finance Officer, shared	5,061	14,843	14,837	19,796	14,843	15,067	24,857	29,686	29,904
Senior Admin Officer, shared	5,061	14,988	14,605	20,019	15,087	14,605	25,080	30,075	29,210
Forum governance				38,139	1,371	4,054	38,139	1,371	4,054
Overhead and unforeseen				58,424	57,921	44,712	58,424	57,921	44,712
Total Secretariat expenditure	121,383	392,682	464,819	820,821	558,106	531,618	942,204	950,788	996,437

²⁵ Figures are taken from the Financial Reports. Sida 2019 figures are only for 4 months, September to December. SDC 2019 figure includes period from 15 November to 31 December 2018. Non personnel costs were considerably affected by COVID-19 restrictions. All costs are expressed in USD.

Annex 6. Resource Mobilisation Efforts at AFF



RESOURCE MOBILIZATION INITIATIVES AT AFF

Apart from the ongoing projects financed by SDC and Sida, AFF in partnership with African countries' governments and sister organizations, at continental and global levels, has participated in several resource mobilization initiatives as follows:

1. African Development Bank-COMIFAC –GCF project on ***“Scaling up implementation of REDD+ in Africa: Implementation of the Abidjan Resolution on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in Africa”***. In collaboration with the AfDB and COMIFAC, AFF facilitated in November 2019 a training on climate finance for REDD+ coordinators from 28 African countries during which a regional concept note was drafted. The concept note was reviewed in a side event organized by COMIFAC and AfDB at the 25th conference of the UNFCCC in Madrid in December 2019. The project is structured in 4 components: 1. Establishment of an African REDD+ experts' forum; 2. Building capacity of REDD+ practitioners; 3. Strengthening regional institutions working on forest management and REDD+; 4. Sharing best practices on REDD+ at global level AFF is involved as a service provider for capacity building in the project. Total budget: US\$ 7,000 000 committed by GCF to accelerate implementation of REDD+ in selected Africa countries. COMIFAC still following up on this.

2. **Green Climate Funds in The Great Green Wall Africa:** In partnership with the Regional FAO Office for Africa, AFF was, in 2020, engaged to develop baseline studies ***and contribute to the development of a project to be submitted to the Green Climate Funds on “Scaling up resilience in Great Green Wall Africa (SURAGGWA)”***. AFF's contribution focused on Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) value chains in 6 countries (Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Senegal). Through the implementation of that project, AFF has built, in countries of the Great Green Wall for Sahara and Sahel (GGWSS) region, a strong grass roots partnership platform in the public and private sectors that are expected to play a critical role in the implementation of the project. Recent updates from FAO indicate that the funding process is progressing very well. AFF was recently requested to share more information on the baseline report to guide the experts hired by FAO to fine tune the project according to GCF requirements.

3. A proposal titled ***“Analysis of women and/or young people in integrated rural agriculture or forest-dependent livelihoods development and conservation initiatives in tropical forested regions”*** was prepared in September 2020 and submitted to THE PACKARD FOUNDATION'S AGRICULTURE, LIVELIHOODS, AND CONSERVATION (ALC) PROGRAM but was not successful. The AFF Secretariat is planning to revise this project for application to the Fund for Innovation in Development (FID) call for proposals.

4. **International Climate Initiative of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety in Germany:** AFF submitted, in early March 2021, a project titled “Resilient Livelihoods, Economies and Landscapes from climate-smart Non-Timber Forest Products value chains management in Africa (RELIEF)” as a lead institution in a consortium involving the University of Bonn and Martin Luther King University in Germany as well as 6 African partners from five African countries (Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia). The six-year project, with a budget of Euro 13,223,259 was not selected for funding. The Secretariat is planning to adjust and update the project to target other donors. Meanwhile, ideas are always sourced from the project when building new resource mobilization initiatives.
5. **African Climate Change Fund of the African Development Bank (AfDB).** AFF as a lead partner, in collaboration with the African Natural Resources Centre (ANRC) of the AfDB and “Réseau des Femmes Africaines pour la Gestion Communautaire des Forêts” (REFACOF) also submitted to AfDB a project titled “**Women and youth led non timber forest products-based enterprises for improved livelihoods and climate change resilience**”. The proposed 3-years project, with a budget of USD 1,000,000, aimed to kick-start viable NTFPs-based enterprises for women and youth in Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Niger through tailor made capacity building and investment activities. Unfortunately, the concept note was not accepted. However, the idea is being considered in a wider multiple-donors project with REFACOF on women-led forest and landscape restoration targeting 20 African countries. The draft concept note was presented at the COFO meeting in Rome on the 6th October 2022.
6. AFF, in collaboration with UNESCO, also submitted a concept note to Global EbA Fund, on “**Ecosystem based adaptation approaches and public-private partnership (PPP) for managing biosphere reserves to improve climate resilience and socio-economic development (EbA&PPP-BR)**”: The project, with a budget of USD 499,206, is to be implemented in Madagascar and Rwanda. We are still expecting feedback from UNESCO.
7. AFF secured a contract through the African Union Commission and financed by a grant from FAO to the tune of US\$109,332 that facilitated the development of the *African Union Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa: 2020-2030*.
8. AFF is working with UN-REDD on a three year project (2023-2025) of the title “Strengthening REDD+ implementation in Africa: capitalizing on best practices and the evolving environment - an AFF and UN-REDD partnership” to the tune of US\$2 million. AFF has worked extensively on the concept note that UN-REDD staff are looking at. Hopefully AFF will be able to access funds from this project that is financed through a grant from SDC to UN-REDD.

9 . Partnership with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)

AFF and SLU have partnered on several research activities and jointly raised funds for them as follows:

9.1 Sustainable business models for tree-based value chains in Sub Saharan Africa. Funded by Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development (FORMAS):

Two-year project 2018-2019, extended to 2020. Amount SEK 1,996,700 (US\$ 219,238)

Project sites: Kenya and Niger; Partners: AFF, SLU, ICRISAT

The project analysed resources, competences, and business models among supply chain (SC) members in Sub-Saharan Africa fostering sustainable and livelihood-improving outcomes.

The study focused on charcoal value chains based on timber forest products from forests, plantations, and agroforestry systems, employing resource-poor actors, women, and young adults.

The objectives:

- Mapping supply chain (SC) structures, members, and processes.
- Identified SC actors, members' resources, competences, and the institutional conditions for supporting livelihoods and sustainability.
- Analysed improvement opportunities of SC members' SC business models.
- Suggested potential ways for SC improvements.

Deliverables: 4 publications

- a) Roos A, Mutta D, Larwanou M, Wekesa C; Kowero G. *Operations and improvement needs in the informal charcoal sector: a participatory value stream analysis*. International Forestry Review, Vol. 23 (3), 2021, 351
- b) Mutta, D.; Mahamane, L.; Wekesa, C.; Kowero, G.; Roos, A. 2021 *Sustainable Business Models for Informal Charcoal Producers in Kenya*. Sustainability 2021,13, 3475. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063475>
- c) *The dynamic impacts of Kenya's charcoal ban on value chains and livelihoods – stakeholder perceptions* Journal: Forest Policy and Economics for consideration.
- d) *Charcoal trade in Niger: Business models and trade flows*. The manuscript is under development

9.2 Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on sustainable livelihoods, forests, and conservation in Africa. Funded by Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development (FORMAS).

One-year project 2020-2021 but extended to 2023 due to COVID. Amount SEK 961,748 (US\$ 114,544)

Project sites: Kenya and Niger: Partners: AFF, SLU, KEFRI, Niamey University

The project was designed to study African low-income households' use of forests and forest products to cope with income losses due to Covid-19 pandemic. Secondly, it is investigating how this use may influence forests and natural resources.

Research questions:

- a) How have production, consumption, and expenditures with regard to forests and forest products developed after the pandemic emerged?
- b) What is the role of forests, and its products, for rural and urban households' livelihoods during the pandemic?
- c) Has the pandemic created an urban-rural migration and, if this is the case, what is the impact on the forest?

9.3 "African Youth for Forests" – Engaging young people for sustainable forests and livelihoods. A pilot study in Kenya. Funded by Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) Global seed

Thirteen months: 2022 – 2023: Funding. Amount SEK 250 000 (US\$ 23,972)

Project site: Kenya. Partners: AFF, SLU, KEFRI

This project aims to engage, involve, and empower Kenyan youth for the sustainable management of the forests. Furthermore, it will generate relevant research and communication proposals about African youth and forests. The activities will be based on knowledge co-creation and a dialogue between researchers and young people.

The objectives:

- Explore the roles of forests in young people's lives and in their communities.
- Inform and communicate with the youth about Kenya's and Africa's forests, their richness, and importance.
- Empower and encourage the youth to articulate their vision of future forests in Kenya and on the continent, and to explore creative approaches for sustainable forest use.
- Identify the niche of youth in forestry.

The outcomes will benefit policymakers, organizations, and young people in primarily Kenya but also other African countries. They will be used for further pan-African interactions with the continent's youth, and to generate research proposals in the field.

The outcome of the pilot project will be used to develop a full project proposal on *Youth in Forests in Africa* including more countries in Africa

10. As part of the AFF sustainability strategy, AFF has been building the capacity of African forestry stakeholders to develop bankable projects and mobilize resources to implement best practices that improve resilience to climate change, including REDD+, and enhance livelihoods in climate sensitive areas of Africa. So far, twenty national small-scale projects have been developed for Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, and Zambia. AFF is planning to work with contracted experts and the stakeholders involved to finalize the project and format them to target local, regional, and multilateral funding sources. These will be funds AFF will catalyse their availability to the countries to sustain these activities; they will not be funds that AFF will manage or use.