



Terms of Reference

Online regional facilitator for a Community of Practice on:

***Enhancing the interest of youth and young professionals on forest
and wildlife profession and education***

May 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. The goal of FAO is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. With 195 members - 194 countries and the European Union, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.

The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) is one of the six regional forestry commissions of FAO. Its purpose is to advise on the formulation of forest and wildlife management policy and to review and coordinate its implementation at the regional level; to exchange information and, generally through special Subsidiary Bodies, advise on suitable practices and action regarding technical problems; and to make appropriate recommendations in relation to the foregoing.

At the 24th Session of the AFWC which took place in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania from 30 October to 3 November 2023, the Commission requested FAO to advance the work on the AFWC thematic areas by working with experts and other partners in Africa, mobilize resources and develop national, subregional and regional projects/programme.

It is in this context that FAO has signed a Letter of Agreement with AFF to provide support to the AFWC 2024 programme of work with respect to the thematic areas on "Climate change" and "Promoting forest and wildlife education and profession in Africa".

The collaboration between FAO and AFF with regard to the AFWC work in these thematic areas has several objectives. These include: (i) reviewing past and ongoing interventions to enhance the interest of youth and young professionals in forestry and wildlife education and profession, with particular emphasis on lessons learnt; (ii) identifying and recommending key actionable areas on this thematic priority (forestry and wildlife education and profession) for consideration in the next session of AFWC and (iii) developing a regional framework for implementation of FAO climate change strategy while taking into account support to the African Union Commission (AUC) to develop framework for implementation of the Nairobi Declaration.

The current activity will contribute to the first two objectives by facilitating exchange of knowledge and experiences among stakeholders on enhancing interest of youth and young professionals in forestry and wildlife education and profession, focusing on lessons learnt, challenges from past and ongoing interventions, and perspectives.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Africa has an estimated 624 million ha of forest, 98.8 percent of which are natural forests¹ hosting a large number of wildlife population. Forests and wildlife are the lifeblood of Africa, particularly for over 60 percent of the population residing in rural areas but in recent years, the effects of climate change, deforestation, and poaching have devastated its rich biodiversity and the livelihoods of millions of vulnerable people^{2,3}. Additionally, the illegal trade in Africa's natural resources deprives African States of revenues, hindering economic growth (AUC Wildlife Strategy). These factors call for stakeholders to step up efforts to combat climate change, restore Africa's forests of all types, including in its fragile drylands and islands, and safeguard its diverse biodiversity.

For sustainable natural resources management, engagement of all gender groups is a prerequisite. Particularly, the active engagement of youth in sustainable development efforts is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies by the target date, and to averting the worst threats and challenges to sustainable development, including the impacts of climate change, unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and migration⁴. Africa has the youngest population in the world with more than 400 million young people aged between the ages of 15 to 35 years⁵. This young population is an asset in addressing environmental issues; however, there is need of adequate education, and to raise interest in related professions.

Many stakeholders (institutions and countries) have taken different initiatives to address the issues of youth and young professionals in forestry and wildlife education and profession⁶ and have got different levels of achievements while also facing different difficulties / challenges.

In this regard, Communities of Practice (CoPs) can serve as an efficient and easily accessible way for peer-to-peer sharing of stakeholders/countries' knowledge, experiences, expertise and lessons learned on past and ongoing interventions / initiatives to enhance the interest of youth and young professionals in forestry and wildlife education and profession.

1.2 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE WORK

In the context of the 2024 annual work plan of the AFF-FAO collaboration on “*Support to the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC)*”, AFF is recruiting one **regional expert to moderate an online Community of Practice (CoP) on “Enhancing the interest of youth and young professionals on forest and wildlife profession and education.”** The CoP will be hosted on a conducive Howspace platform and will involve both webinar series and web-based interactions. The **online moderator is expected to**

¹ FAO. 2022. The State of the World's Forests 2022. Forest pathways for green recovery and building inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb9360en>

² <https://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/1265434/>

³ <https://www.iucn.org/story/202211/wildlife-changing-climate>

⁴ UN 2018. World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN, New York

⁵ <https://au.int/en/youth-development>

⁶ <https://www.awf.org/news/african-youth-lead-future-biodiversity-conservation>

encourage / engage and guide stakeholders to attend the webinar series and the web-based discussions and share their knowledge, experiences, best practices and challenges on addressing climate change in forestry and wildlife sector. At the end of each session, the moderator will synthesize views, lessons and recommendations to be posted on the CoP's Howspace, easily accessible to all community members.

The event will also provide a platform for sharing of knowledge products tailored to addressing climate change in African forestry and wildlife sector.

1.3 SCOPE OF WORK

The key tasks of this assignment are as follows:

- i) in collaboration with AFF, develop a concept note and elaborate a programme for the CoP, including topics for the online discussion forum;
- ii) Promote the CoP, identify a wide range of stakeholders and start engaging them on the "Howspace" platform at least one week before the webinar sessions;
- iii) Work with AFF Secretariat to tailor discussion topics in line with the thematic area of the CoP as well as the project outcomes.
- iv) Identify and engage a broad range of stakeholders including relevant networks, individuals, and institutions with specific expertise and experiences on climate change in African forestry and wildlife sector, then invite them to participate to enrich the online discussion;
- v) Develop, in collaboration with AFF and selected resource persons, daily presentations on the selected topics to guide the online discussion;
- vi) Actively guide the discussion to ensure it remains focused on the agenda, address all discussion questions and at the end of each session, draft and post a daily summary note.
- vii) Daily tasks of the CoP's moderator, to be done during the 2 to 3 hours daily webinar sessions starting from the **6th August 2024 for 2 weeks** include:
 - a. Welcome participants to the virtual discussion;
 - b. Introduce the topic, prepare, and deliver presentations and/or facilitate their delivery by identified guest speakers and drive discussions to address any open/pending issues.
 - c. Provide encouragement/energizer to drive the discussion when no contributions have been posted, by posing/fielding questions, contacting members directly through the platform, posting complementary content such as documents, websites, and text.
- VIII) Propose and discuss with the CoP members plausible approaches and a strategy to sustain interactions on the platform after the two-weeks' webinar series
- IX) Continue the moderation of the discussions among community's members on the web based Howspace at least two weeks after the end of the webinar series guided by the proposed sustainability strategy.
- X) Document key issues raised, and actions proposed from the CoP members.

1.4 DELIVERABLES

This assignment aims to deliver the following:

- Useful resources for the e-discussion uploaded and shared regularly.
- Daily summaries of the e-discussions

- A strategy and action plan to sustain interactions and peer-to-peer learning among the community after the webinar sessions.
- Final report of the assignment to be submitted one week after the end of the COP sessions. The outline of the report will be agreed upon with AFF.

1.5 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

The online discussion moderators must have the following qualifications and skills:

- At least a master’s degree in forestry, wildlife science / management, natural resource management or any related area, with experience in climate change, a PhD will be an added advantage.
- At least five years’ working experience in sustainable forest / wildlife management in the context of climate change;
- Proven experience in the issues youth and young professionals in forestry and wildlife education and profession; or in the issues of gender in natural resources management in general;
- Proven skills and experience in writing technical reports and the like, on topics related to sustainable forest / wildlife management taking into account gender issues particularly youth participation;
- Excellent communication skills in English. Knowledge of French is an added advantage.
- Experience in moderating CoPs, multi-stakeholders’ engagement and participatory actions or events are desirable.

1.6 DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

The work is expected to take one (1) calendar month, commencing on **23rd July 2024**. The online regional facilitator will work from own location but be in close consultation with relevant staff at the AFF Secretariat while keeping to an agreed delivery schedule.

1.7 DEADLINES

- (i) Applications must be received by the AFF Secretariat on or before **10 June 2024**.
- (ii) Consultancy activities must begin no later than **23rd July 2024**.

1.8 HOW TO APPLY

Please email your application to AFF, attaching: (a) A cover letter stating how you meet the above qualifications and experience requirements; (b) An updated CV (not more than 10 pages). Indicate the subject line: “**Consultancy: Online regional facilitator for a Community of Practice on enhancing the interest of youth and young professionals on forest and wildlife profession and education**” to d.gitonga@cifor-icraf.org with a copy to d.dayamba@cifor-icraf.org and exec.sec@afforum.org. Only successful applicants will be contacted.