



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



 Sweden
Sverige

Global Transformation of Forests for People and Climate:

A FOCUS ON WEST AFRICA



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The five-year project “Global Forest Transformation for People and Climate: a focus on West Africa,” a collaboration between ECOWAS, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), **aims to strengthen sustainable forest and land management, address transboundary threats to forests, improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities and build climate resilience in fifteen West African countries** (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte

d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo). The project is designed to support the implementation of the 2013 ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa by contributing to three out of its seven priority areas: **Improving knowledge of forest dynamics (Focus Area 01), Facilitating legal reform and harmonization (Focus Area 02), and Supporting and sharing good community forestry practices throughout the region (Focus Area 03).**

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**GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION
OF FORESTS FOR PEOPLE AND
CLIMATE
FOCUS ON WEST AFRICA:
SIGNIFICANT RESULTS
FOR PEOPLE AND CLIMATE
THROUGH FAO SUPPORT IN
COLLABORATION WITH ECOWAS
AND SIDA**



People in 15 West African countries benefit from the intervention of FAO in collaboration with ECOWAS since 2019 through the project:

“Global Transformation of Forests for People and Climate _ Focus on West Africa”, funded by Sida to strengthen decision-making on forests and land management across the region.

The project supports the implementation of the ECOWAS Forest convergence plan by improving the knowledge of forest status and dynamics, supporting forest legal frameworks reform, and demonstrating and sharing the best community-based forest practices across the region and globally. With its regional focus on sustainable management of forest ecosystems, the project puts emphasis on three cross-cutting, overarching themes:

Transboundary challenges: To ensure that the cross-border nature of forest ecosystems is effectively taken into account,

Gender responsiveness mainstreaming in all project activities,

Contribution to the mitigation of COVID negative impact on vulnerable communities' livelihoods

Knowledge of the state of forest ecosystem dynamics.



Focus 1: Knowledge of the state of forest ecosystem dynamics.

Based on the recommendations of the above mentioned report:

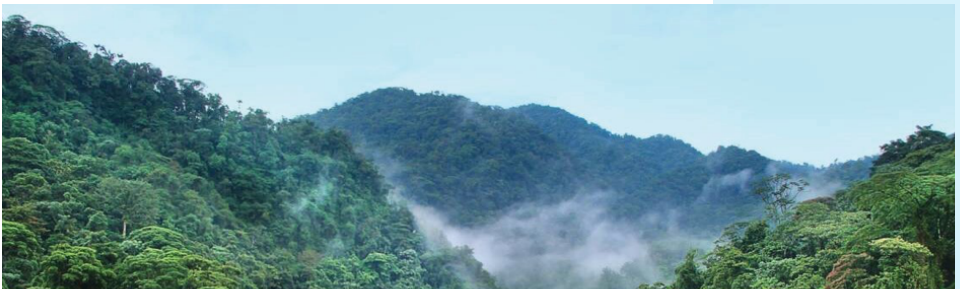


Collaboration has been established with three research institutions: Forest Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG); University of Oxford and University of Maryland to use an innovative approach that will link field data, airborne LiDAR data (airborne laser scanner) and space-based GEDI data to develop an above-ground biomass estimation model to address the lack of certain forestry data and to generate new data that can be harmonized at the regional level to also help address the need for accurate and up-to-date forest cover and biomass maps for the region

The report of compilation and assessment of available data on forest in the sub region has been finalized. It helped to identify critical gaps of information on forest status and land cover/land use dynamics and the capacity development needs on NFI. In addition to the assessment at the sub regional level, the report contains forest data factsheets for each country. 14 out of the 15 countries have cleared their factsheets, whose publication is foreseen in 2023.



Capacity development trainings on forest inventory and data analysis using digital tools are planned for technicians of all 15 countries in summer of 2023.





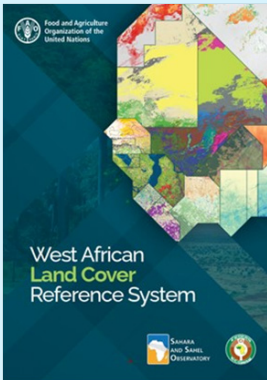
Capacity development through virtual training of **30 experts** and focal points from the sub-region, on the **Land Cover Classification System version 3 (LCCS-v3)** to build their capacity to use and develop the Land

Cover Classification System for land, forest and water monitoring

Capacity development on **forest monitoring using National Forest Inventory (NFI) and geospatial tools** of about **600 forestry and remote sensing/GIS technical staff** from all 15 ECOWAS countries and across the world with participation of about 26 percent of women.



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Co-publication and co-launch of the first ever West Africa Land Cover Reference System (WALCRS) West African Land Cover Reference System (fao.org) (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0730en>), in 2022 by FAO; Agrometeorology, Hydrology and Meteorology Regional Centre (AGRHYMET); ECOWAS; Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), in collaboration with the West Africa Network of Land Cover land use national experts

REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE WEB PORTAL

Agreement has been signed with **AGRHYMET Regional Center** to **host the regional knowledge Web portal**, through **integration** within their already existing geoportal promoting synergies, cost sharing, complementarity and most importantly **sustainability and ownership at the regional level**. This approach will foster complementarity with other type of portals used in the subregion, it will be an important platform for sharing forest data, lessons learnt and good practices.

Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

The systematic review of existing national and regional studies on drivers of deforestation and forest degradation was completed in 2022. Forty-nine (49) different direct and indirect drivers of forest change in the ECOWAS region were identified in the 174 sources reviewed.

Through this extensive literature review and a participatory approach involving ECOWAS partners **10 out of those 49 drivers were deemed most relevant.** These 10 drivers are assessed through remote sensing methods using Collect Earth and Collect Earth Online for 1 000 sample points, and a simplified land cover legend based on WALCRS. **The visual interpretation of these points has identified (1) small-scale agriculture, (2) small scale logging, (3) fire, and (4) urbanization as the 4-top drivers in the region.**

In 2023, the assessment of main drivers of forest change will be scaled up from 1,000 points to 10,000 to improve accuracy. A guide for visual interpretation of land cover and drivers of change has been developed to share the methodology and scale up the assessment in collaboration with experts from ECOWAS member states. The results of the assessment will be posted in the knowledge portal for use by the different actors in 2024.

Focus 2: Forest and Land-related Laws, Policies and Strategies at the Subregional Level



The forest legal framework analysis to identify gaps and formulate recommendations, considering the gender and transboundary issues is underway in 7 countries of the region. The forest legal framework analysis has been conducted in 6 out of the 7 selected countries and national Validation workshops have been held for Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire with the participation of about 200 people (in hybrid form) among them 50 women.

Among other follow-up actions under this focus area are:

- 1- editing and publishing to a wider audience of all the national forest legal framework reports,
- 2- initiating a guiding document on decentralized forest local governance and a comparative analysis study on legal options, including recommendation to promote forest law harmonization for a better transboundary forest management legal issue, and
- 3- elaborating a training of trainer's curriculum on combatting wildlife crimes in support of the implementation of the regional strategy to combat wildlife.

Strengthening the forestry legal framework in ECOWAS countries

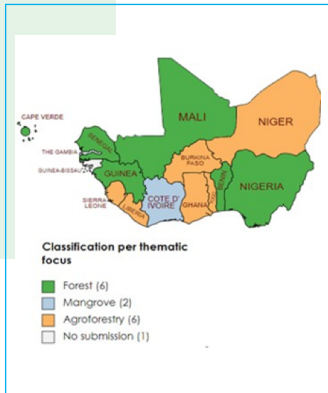


Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast
Guinea, Gambia, Ghana



Focus 3: Demonstration of Community-based Sustainable Forest and Land Use Practices and Encouraging South –South Cooperation

15 community-based forestry demonstration initiatives from 15 ECOWAS member states have been selected through an open call for proposals in close collaboration with ECWAS' Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (ARAA). The support to these small demonstration initiatives aims to:



Develop, demonstrate and share knowledge on sustainable community forest and land management initiatives in West Africa

Highlight the potential positive economic, social and environmental contributions of Community Based forest management approach to the populations livelihoods

To-date 13 agreements have been signed and the implementation has started in the fields.

As for 2023 the main aims are to:

- Finalize, sign, and launch the remaining 2 agreements with the other selected service providers.
- Organize an orientation workshop with all 15 community initiatives in close collaboration with ARAA.,
- Hold the Community-based Forest Practitioners' workshop,
- Develop an online training module on good practices integrating gender aspects.

In the gender specific area:

Co-publication, between FAO, the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre and Sida, of an info brief on: Gender equality and forestry in West Africa ([fao.org](https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB4280EN)) (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB4280EN>)

A discussion meeting around the main themes of the publication was organized in 2022 with participation of over 50 stakeholders including Sida, ECOWAS EGDC, civil society organizations, government institutions, regional programs and projects etc.

The discussions raised a great interest in this subject matter and has led to the creation of a practitioners' group to continue the discussion.

A follow up meeting is planned in 2023.

