

Terms of Reference for Mauritius National Consultant
UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF)

Background

Forests cover 33% of the earth's land area and provide multiple social, economic and environmental benefits to humankind through its significant contribution to poverty eradication, climate change mitigation and adaptation, maintaining of biodiversity, clean air, water quality, weather stability, etc. However, forests, especially natural forests, are still disappearing in an alarming rate. From 2010 to 2015, 32.5 million hectares of natural forests were lost globally (FAO-FRA 2015). With acknowledgement of the importance of forests, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015 squarely address the need for forests and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in its Goal 15. In addition, forests and SFM also contribute to the achievement of most of the other SDGs through their multiple functions. In January 2017, the UN General Assembly adopted the first ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests (2017-2030) (UNSPF), which provides a global framework for actions to sustainably manage of forests and halt deforestation and forest degradation in a holistic and coherent manner.

A major constraint to achieving the forest-related SDGs and UNSPF, is the lack of funding for forests and SFM, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, mainly due to other pressing priorities such as employment, health and education, and general lack of resources and poverty. Furthermore, despite significant resources being available from existing international funding mechanisms (especially climate financing), the actual financial flows to developing countries and countries with economies in transition have been limited by a number of disbursement constraints. In fact, poor access to international (multilateral and bilateral) funding often presents additional challenges to the sheer availability of financial resources for SFM. Conclusions drawn from working experiences of the UNFFS show that limited access to international forest financing is due to many factors that include, among others:

- Lack of capacities to develop effective strategic plan to leverage forest financing
- Challenges in governance related issues
- Weak country capacities to prepare bankable/fundable projects
- Under-resourced public institutions
- Inadequate or flawed policies

Further, the disruptions to the world economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have hit small island developing states (SIDS) particularly hard. Due to their small size, remoteness, high dependence on trading partners and reliance on a few key sectors they are highly vulnerable to external shocks. The pandemic has wrought serious economic hardship on SIDS, who were unprepared for the multidimensional impact of the pandemic. GDP dropped by 9% in SIDS in 2020, compared to a 3.3% decline in other developing countries per IMF estimates. Important sectors such as tourism and fisheries have suffered particular hardships. Fiscal measures put in place to keep

economies afloat during the pandemic and to alleviate its economic consequences resulted in rising debt burdens, making the need for appropriate recovery strategies and access to development finance even more pressing at this time. Long-standing problems are also heightened by climate change, which has meant escalating costs from the impacts of natural disasters and a greater emphasis on the need for disaster risk management. The increase in food and commodity prices seen in 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has further exposed the vulnerability of these import dependent countries.

During the pandemic, African countries reported a significant reduction in public and private financing in the forest sector and as a result a rational pathway for recovery of the forest sectors of Africa is an obvious necessity. Further, COVID-19 adversely impacted on foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa and the rest of the world. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2020) predicted that FDI flows to Africa contracted by 25% to 40% in 2020.

It is in this context that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) on-going work through the GFFFN supports developing countries in developing national forest financing strategies (NFFS). Further, DESA has developed the current Development Account 15th Tranche project *“Integrating and Coherent National Recovery Strategies Promoting Social Inclusion, Macroeconomic Stability, effective Governance and protection of the Environment for selected Small Island Developing States(SIDS)”* that is designed to strengthen the capacity of selected small island developing countries to develop integrated and coherent national strategies to recover and rebuild better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project aims to build the capacity of Mauritius to develop a national forest financing strategy and measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on forest cover, aspects of forest management, enhance the livelihoods of forest dependent people, address institutional capacity at national to regional levels, improve manufacturing and trade, employment, increase financial flows into the forest sector and encourage the adoption of forest certification and traceability of forest products. This also includes measures to address the impacts of the pandemic to accelerate socio-economic recovery and inclusive sustainable development which will be incorporated into the design of new and/or updating the existing national forest programmes/forest action plans and the associated national forest financing strategies.

The consultant has completed the following activities during her initial contract as part of the package to develop a forest financing strategy (NFFS) for Mauritius:

1. Produce and submit an inception report describing the methodology and processes to be used in undertaking the work and a detailed work plan;
2. Produce a background study/situation analysis report which informs the NFFS for Mauritius.

Tasks and activities:

The consultant will carry out the following tasks and activities to complete the assignment that started on 15 December 2024:

- (i) Facilitate, with the assistance of the national UNFF focal point, national stakeholder consultations and other processes to get stakeholders' input in formulating the NFFS and develop links with the national planning process;
- (ii) Assist UNFFS and international consultants in the organization of the capacity building and validation workshops;
- (iii) Produce the national capacity building workshop report;

Contract Duration

The **national consultant** will be engaged for 40 working days from 15 December 2024 to 30 August 2025.

Duty Station

The **national consultant** will work remotely for most of the contract and remain available for regular supervisory and review teleconferences.

Travel

Not applicable

Expected Outputs and Delivery Dates

Capacity building workshop and validation workshop reports by 30 August 2025.

Fee and Payment schedule

The national consultant will be paid a total of \$4,000.00 payable in one instalments as follows:

- Final payment (\$4,000.00) upon successful completion and approval of all final deliverables by 30 August 2025.

Performance Indicators

1. Capacity building workshop and validation reports.

Competencies and Qualifications

The **national consultant** shall have the following competencies and qualifications:

1. At least 7 years' experience in sustainable forest management and with forest policy analysis and programming at strategic levels;
2. Have demonstrated technical/scientific expertise relating to forest management, international cooperation, biodiversity conservation, the role of forests in climate

- change mitigation and adaptation, community-based forest management, forest financing, payment for environmental services, emerging carbon markets/emissions trading systems including REDD+;
3. Excellent policy analytical, technical, managerial and drafting skills;
 4. Possess thorough knowledge on the UNFF, Rio Conventions and protocols, regional forest agreements and/or Protocols as well as national forestry and forest-related programmes and institutional arrangements in the country;
 5. Have an advanced university degree in forest management, economics, social, environmental. studies, natural sciences, development studies, or any related discipline. A first-level university degree in combination with qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.
 6. Ability to prepare and present reports in English;
 7. Be free from any interest that might cause him/her to act in other than an impartial and non-discriminatory manner.

Supervision

The **national consultant** will work under the direct supervision of Ms. Njeri Kariuki, under the overall guidance of Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director UNFFS and Deputy Director, Minoru Takada.

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