

Concept Note
Capacity Building workshop on Forest Financing for
Mauritius
Port Louis, Mauritius
28-30 July 2025

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

at 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 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 development priorities, poverty and limited capacity to access international funding mechanisms.

Further, the disruptions to the world economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have hit 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.

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.

Workshop objective:

The aim of this workshop is to strengthen the national capacity of Mauritius to develop a national financing strategy for the forest and environmental sectors which will enable it to access increased funding and use them to among other things, mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the forest sector. In doing so, the forest sector is expected, enhance the livelihoods of forest dependent people, improve institutional capacity to achieve its national objectives with respect to SFM.

The Workshop participants

The workshop will be attended by participants drawn from government agencies, international organizations, civil society, academia and private sector from Mauritius. It is envisaged that the workshop will be attended by 40 participants. The workshop will be guided by the UNFFS representatives and the international consultant. Given the cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder nature of forestry the participants will be drawn from the following:

- Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Agro-Industry and Food Security Division),
- Representative from the Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity Division Representative from the Department of Environment
- Representative from the Department of Climate Change
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning
- Ministry of Housing and Land Use planning

- Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
- Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
- Ministry of Gender and Family Welfare
- Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Water Resources Commission
- Statistics Mauritius
- Mauritius Cane Industry Authority
- Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture (Representing Private Sector)
- Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI)
- Mauritius Research and Innovation Council
- University of Mauritius
- Ebony Forest Ltd -Private Forest landowner
- Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (NGO)
- National Youth Environment Council
- Representatives from international and regional donor and development organizations – UN Country Office, UNDP, FAO, World Bank, IOC, SADC amongst others

Workshop organization and process

The workshop will be held in English and will comprise presentations and discussions in plenary and working group sessions, building upon the proposed topics. A tentative agenda is attached below.

Objectives of the Validation Workshop

The overall objective of this workshop is to highlight and seek agreement on what Mauritius will do to address its capacity needs for the forest sector and generate buy-in from stakeholders, bearing in mind the inter-sectoral nature of the forest sector in the context of Mauritius. Furthermore, the workshop will provide a platform for a common vision, workplan and expected outcomes associated with the Capacity Building process.

Relevant Documents

1. Guidelines for addressing the impacts of the pandemic and building on long-term recovery and contributions of forests to inclusive sustainable development
2. The United Nations strategic plan for forests 2015-2030
3. Workshop Agenda and provisional organization of work
4. The Situational Analysis Report for the Development of National Forest Financing Strategy for Mauritius

Tentative Agenda: Capacity Building workshop on Forest Financing for Mauritius Port Louis, Mauritius 28-30 July 2025	
Monday, 28 July 2025 (Day 1):	
Opening	
09.00 -09.30 AM	Arrival Coffee/Tea Break
9:30-9:45 Am	Mauritius National Conservator of Forests
9:45-10:00 Am	UNFFS-Opening and introduction of workshop objectives
10.00 - 10.30 AM	Ice-Breaker: Participant Introductions and Expectations Setting <i>(Interactive ice-breaker activity to identify key areas of interest and learning objectives from participants)</i>
10.30- 10.45 COFFEE / TEA BREAK	
Session 1: Situational Analysis of Mauritius's Forest Sector and Financing Needs	
10.45 - 10.55AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by UNFF Focal Point on the status of the forest sector in Mauritius: Context and Challenges
10:55 - 11.20 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation on Situational Analysis Report for the Development of National Forest Financing Strategy for Mauritius by the National Consultant: <i>(Detailed presentation on existing data, gaps, and specific financing challenges for SFM in Mauritius)</i>
11.20 - 11.025 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and broad elements of forest financing by UNFFS
11.25 - 12.00 PM	Q&A
12:00 -13.00 PM LUNCH BREAK	
Session 2: State of forests sector in Mauritius, the GFFFN and elements to develop forest financing strategies including the measured and perceived impacts of COVID19 and the national responses by Mauritius	

13.10 - 13.30 PM	<p>Panel: Perspectives on Forest Sector Challenges and Opportunities in Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Presenters:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture (Private Sector perspective on agriculture-forest nexus) TBC ▪ Ebony Forest Ltd (Private Forest Landowner perspective on sustainable management and financing) TBC ▪ Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (NGO perspective on conservation and community engagement) ▪ National Youth Environment Council (Youth perspective on forest issues and youth participation) TBC ▪ University of Mauritius (Academia perspective on research, innovation, and capacity needs) TBC <p>Q&A</p>
13:30-15:30	<p>International Consultant's presentation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overview of various innovative financing sources in the forest and environment sector:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mapping SFM priorities ○ Mapping financing sources ○ Matching SFM priorities with financing sources ○ Strategies and action plan for accessing resources from the different sources for relevant stakeholders. • Cross-cutting issues including the policy and other institutional requirements to create an enabling environment for resource mobilization will also be addressed. <p><i>The "Guidelines for addressing the impacts of the pandemic and building on long-term recovery and contributions of forests to inclusive sustainable development" as it relates to SFM financing</i></p>
15.30 - 15.45 PM COFFEE/TEA BREAK	
15.45 - 16.00PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary discussion and Q&A
Tuesday, 29 July 2025 (Day 2)	
Session 3: Developing the National Forest Financing Strategy (NFFS)	
09.00 - 09:30 AM	Recap and NFFS Step 1: Mapping SFM Priorities

09:30 – 10.30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Analysis: Presentation by International Consultant • Working Groups: Working Groups: Problem analysis relevant to Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Mauritius <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participants identify and prioritize key problems of the forest sector, their root causes and their implications on financing.
10:30 – 10:45 COFFEE / TEA BREAK	
Session 4: Group Work and Presentations	
11:00 – 12:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups report back to plenary on their problem analysis and Q&A • Working Groups: Identifying and Mapping Potential Financing Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Activity:</i> Participants identify various national (public, private), international (bilateral, multilateral), and innovative funding opportunities relevant to Mauritius's SFM priorities. ○ <i>(This covers "Mapping financing sources" from the 4-step approach)</i>
12:00 – 13:00 PM LUNCH BREAK	
Session 5: Matching Priorities with Financing & Cross-Cutting Issues – Reference to Innovative Financing Mechanisms	
13:00– 14:00PM	<p>Working Groups: Identifying and Mapping Potential Financing Sources report back to plenary followed by Q&A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups: Matching SFM Priorities with Identified Financing Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participants begin to align specific SFM priority areas/actions with suitable financing mechanisms and potential sources, discussing feasibility and requirements. ○ <i>(This covers "Matching SFM priorities with financing sources" from the 4-step approach)</i> <p>Followed by feedback and Q&A</p>
14:00-15:30PM	<p><i>Facilitator:</i> International Consultant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discussion on policy and institutional requirements to create an enabling environment for resource mobilization, including</i>

	<i>enhancing livelihoods, improving manufacturing and trade, employment generation, institutional capacity, forest certification, and traceability of forest products.</i>
15:30– 15.45 PM COFFEE / TEA BREAK	
15.45 – 16.00 PM	<i>Discussion continued</i>
Wednesday, 30 July 2025 (DAY 3)	
Session 6: Developing a National Forest Financing Strategy (NFFS) for Mauritius	
09.00 – 10.30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups: Developing Strategies and Action Plans for Accessing Financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Activity:</i> Participants elaborate on concrete steps, timelines, and responsibilities for accessing resources from different sources, including strategies for developing "bankable projects" for multilateral financing. ◦ <i>(This covers "Strategies and action plan for accessing resources" from the 4-step approach and "40 national experts with improved knowledge and skills of developing and formulating bankable projects for accessing financing from multilateral financing sources")</i>
10.30 – 10.45 AM	COFFEE / TEA BREAK
10:45 AM-12:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups on developing strategies and action plans for accessing financing report back to plenary <p>Building a Theory of Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by the International Consultant – Could us the Island of Rodrigues as a Case Study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Facilitator:</i> International Consultant ◦ <i>(Collective review of all working group outputs, ensuring coherence and completeness to form the basis of the NFFS recommendations for Mauritius)</i>
12:15-13:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK
13:00-15:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective review of all working group outputs, ensuring coherence and completeness to form the basis of the NFFS recommendations for Mauritius continue

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on the way forward: Discussion on the Way Forward: Follow-up Actions and Validation of the Draft NFFS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Facilitator:</i> UNFFS Representative ◦ <i>(Discussion on the process for developing the draft NFFS by UNFFS/international consultant, subsequent validation by key stakeholders, and integration into national forest programmes/action plans for socio-economic recovery and sustainable development.)</i>
15:30-15:45PM	COFFEE/TEA BREAK
15:45-16:00PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding remarks and workshop closure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Speakers:</i> UNFFS Representative, National Conservator of Forests, and other relevant officials. ◦ <i>(Acknowledgements and expression of gratitude.)</i>