



EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA FOREST OBSERVATORY



Towards a Forest Data Sharing Framework – Experience from OFESA Project

Synthesis Workshop of TransMoni Project

Ivy Amugune
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INTRODUCTION

OFESA Objective

Develop a reliable monitoring system to assist countries in reporting on their climate obligations and produce a comprehensive, harmonized regional dataset on the latest trends and threats to forests.

Key Result area 2 - Development of a sustainable governance framework for data sharing

- Governance review work was undertaken in 5 countries
- Methodology used was review of legal issues on data sharing in the countries; national level engagements the regional level engagement





Regional Legal Frameworks

- SADC Protocol on Forestry – Articles 9, 10 and 21
- EAC Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources – Article 11
- Agreement establishing the RCMD - Article 10 and 8





Challenges around Data Sharing in Region

Common challenges on data sharing within the countries:

- Trust issues internally and externally
- Defensive culture of data sharing, defined by general reluctance to share, or sharing the minimum, if at all.
- Absence (weak) internal policies on data sharing
- Raw data sharing is a challenge.
- Final use of data, feedback loop, credit/acknowledgment of data source.





Legal Framework in Ethiopia

Access to Information Rights:

- Constitution guarantees right to access information and freedom of expression.
- Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation No. 590/2008.
 - Information broadly defined as any recorded material.
 - Right to access information held by public bodies for all persons.
 - Right includes knowing if a public body holds the requested information.
 - Public bodies must publish information.

Forestry Sector Information Policy:

- Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Policy and Strategy (2007).
- Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Proclamation No. 1065/2018.
 - Emphasis on continuous information exchange in forestry.
- The Forest Policy and Strategy prioritizes collecting, organizing, analysing, and disseminating forest-related information.
- However, despite the legal basis, no specific data and information sharing policy for forests established yet.
 - Draft policy prepared in 2018 but not endorsed.
 - Limited implementation and practical significance of constitutional provisions for data sharing in Ethiopia.



Key Data Sharing Challenges in Ethiopia

Challenges:

- While there is a legal framework in place, absence of internal organizational policies on data sharing creates barriers.
- Lack of data collection standards (e.g., sampling, sample plot shape, plot sizes, sample size).
- Mistrust in data sharing, including amongst colleagues within an institution.
- Absence of human resources skilled to provide requested technical data.
- Poor data management practices, including lack of central repositories that permit data tracking with ease.
- The need for senior officer approval before sharing data, this can delay and create unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks.





Factors for Successful Collaboration

- Digital platforms for sharing information such as OFESA or at the national level that are developed and operated collaboratively.
- Standardization of data collection methodologies
- Presence of data dissemination of institutional platforms (Websites).
- Building trust and accountability.
- Shortening long—step processes and defensive data sharing.
- Having an enabling legal framework.



Principles to inform regional forest data sharing governance.

- Consistency in data acquisition methodology and sharing.
- Coordination amongst key actors.
- Evidence-based data acquisition.
- Accommodating the roles of different actors and enhanced conscious stakeholder cooperation.
- Classification of data based on access: Open, closed, or restricted access.
- Working with knowledge generated and evidence-based data.
- Having Trustworthy, accurate, valuable, and reliable data.
- Validation of data especially by stakeholders who provided the data.
- Value addition to data by subsequent users without distortion.
- Interpretation of laws and policies on forest data sharing.
- Putting in place guiding rules on intellectual property rights.
- Development and collaborative of forest data sharing infrastructure.



Thank you



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