



Are you winning? Do you need advice or coaching?

OPTIMENTUS provides exclusive, discreet and specialized coaching and professional development services to Board Directors, CEOs, top level executives and high potential managers.



We deliver cost effective, inclusive outcomes that have a measurable impact and meet the needs of discerning individuals and teams in private and public sector organizations worldwide.

Our services include:

- Psychometric profiling
- Team interventions
- HR training and Cross-cultural advice
- Leadership development and Executive coaching
- Assessment and Development Centres

Prama House 267 Banbury Road Oxford OX2 7HT, U.K
Tel: +44 1865 316511 +44 7833 222515 email: info@optimentus.com
www.optimentus.com

AFRICAN UNION RESEARCH GRANTS: 2016 - OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Reference: [HRST/ST/AURG-II/CALL1/2016]

The African Union Commission is seeking proposals for research in Africa focusing on the thematic area: Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) with a focus on Sustainable Intensification as articulated within the Africa's Science Technology and Innovation Strategy-2024 adopted by the AU Executive Council decision EX.CL/839(XXV), which addresses aspirations identified under the Agenda 2063 and Priority area 3 on Human development of the EU-Africa partnership under the implementation mechanisms of the EU-Africa HLPD for STI. The programme is financed through financing assistance from the European Commission Pan-African Programme (PanAf).

The full Guidelines for Applicants, Application form and other supporting documents are available for downloading from the Internet Site <http://au.int/en/AURG>

The deadline for submission of proposals is 17 August 2016 at 1700 hours (+3 GMT) Addis Ababa.

Contact: Programme Management Unit of the African Union Research Grant
Department of HRST
African Union Commission
P. O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: research-info@africa-union.org



The AFR100 plan aims to restore 100m ha of degraded forest in Africa. A project in Ghana illustrates what can be done and the challenges that lie ahead.

Reforesting Africa



Top: In Cameroon, a truck transports logs towards the coast.

The world's forests are being lost at an alarming rate. The repercussions of this loss are profoundly serious, and Africa is on the front line.

The World Resources Institute states that African countries have experienced the world's most extreme land degradation through deforestation and this is seriously impacting Africa's economic development and compromising the continent's resilience to climate change.

There are various reasons for deforestation, all due to human activity. A major factor is a reliance on the biomass energy from burning firewood and charcoal. By some estimates, about 90% of wood that is gathered, including felled timber, is used as fuel.

And yet, trees absorb and store carbon dioxide, pumping out oxygen, filtering the air and purifying water. They provide a refuge for thousands of species of fauna and flora, and are an important resource for both food and medicines. So how can forest loss be halted and reversed?

This was the theme of a major conference held in March in Accra, Ghana, entitled Forests for the Future – New Forests for Africa.

Over two days of debate and a one-day site visit, delegates were able to share their views and discuss the practicalities of restoring Africa's landscape and reforesting the continent.

The message was that Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) can deliver significant benefits, and that restoration efforts have already proven successful in several African countries. It is now time to scale up FLR to meet the target of reforesting 100m ha (equivalent to 1m km²) set by AFR100. This plan – the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative – was agreed by 10 African countries at the Cop21 talks in Paris, December 2015.

A principal sponsor of the conference was the Dutch forest management company Form International. The company has been working in Ghana since 1999, when it began researching the possibility of developing a forest plantation, establishing a pilot project of



RWANDA

5-6 October 2016 Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Center, Kigali, Rwanda

The Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF) is the continent's leading hotel investment conference.

It brings together over 500 top-level hotel investors, operators, developers, and advisors from over 50 countries, including government ministers from African nations. This premier event is THE event to network and discuss the latest developments, trends and opportunities available in this emerging market.

Africa Hotel Investment Forum Rwanda will look further at the economic trends, air connectivity and ultimately, how to drive investment into tourism projects.



www.africa-conference.com/rwanda



@AHIF_news, #AHIF16



If you take something from the earth today, you need to put something back in return.

64ha of teak in the Asubima Forest Reserve, north of Kumasi, in 2001. Its subsidiary Form Ghana was established in 2007

Form International's executive director Paul Hol explains that the company had begun working closely with the Forestry Commission of Ghana and had been greatly attracted by the government's policies seeking to stimulate foreign investors in the restoration of Ghana's degraded forest reserves.

Underpinning these policies was the 2006 legislation for land lease concepts for forest reserves in Ghana. These laws allowed Form Ghana to lease land from the government, which manages it on behalf of traditional land-owners.

Ghana was once renowned for its extensive forests and wooded savannah, but the situation has changed dramatically. Tropical moist forest originally extended over 145,000km² of Ghana. By the mid-1970s, more than 90% of the country's high forests had been logged. The area of intact forest was estimated in 2007 at between 10.9 and 11.8% of the original cover and 6.9% of the country's total area. Nine years ago the rates of deforestation were averaging 22,000ha a year.

Kofi Annan, the former UN secretary-general (1997–2006) was a keynote speaker at the conference. He had, first hand, witnessed the terrible rate of loss of Ghana's woodlands. In his address he recalled that before he married Nane Lagergren in 1984, he had told her about his country's wonderful forests. When he took his young bride home, she asked him to explain his claims.

Annan told the conference: "When we arrived, my wife asked me: 'Where are all the forests?' It was a sobering moment. I was speechless; most of the forests were indeed gone."

However, Annan offered some more optimistic comments in telling delegates: "If done properly, commercial forest plantations have a huge potential to restore degraded land and reduce pressure on natural forests.

"But let me stress that the new must not lead to the destruction or neglect of the old. Several companies in Africa, including Form Ghana, have set up sustainable forestry projects based on a long-term approach and multi-stakeholder benefit.

"They understand, what all farmers know, that if you take something from the earth today, you need to put something back in return; because if you don't do so, the cycle cannot continue."

It is interesting that Annan refers to farmers and farming given his commitment to the agriculture

sector that he believes must be central to Africa's sustainable development.

Annan is the chairman of AGRA, an independent African-led and Africa-based organisation committed to putting farmers at the centre of the continent's growing economies. It has worked across 18 African countries to serve millions of farmers and thousands of local agribusinesses.

Business model

Form Ghana has been collaborating with farmers who work in proximity to the forestry reserves by developing an intercropping strategy. Farmers can grow certain agricultural crops between the trees up to two years after tree planting.

This has a number of benefits. Intercropping, before the forest canopy has fully grown, allows crops to be cultivated, improving food security as well as cutting the need for weeding during the forest's sapling stages. In addition, it involves the local community in the forest's ongoing maintenance and management.

Clearly, carrying the local community forward within Form Ghana's forestry vision is crucial to the company. But just as crucial is developing a business model that can attract more investment in the sector, and that is a challenge. The sector requires "patient", long-term capital.

Form Ghana has a major investor, Sustainable Forestry Investments (SFI), and has selected teak as its primary timber crop. It aims to utilise degraded land and the trees are established and managed on a rotation system with a continuous cycle of planting, growing and harvesting. In general, thinning takes place after eight years with a final harvest at 20 years.

Teak is fast growing and has a high value. Much of the timber is exported to India. In January 2016, Form Ghana completed a harvest of 3,000m³ of quality teak from its Asubima Forest Reserve, the first in Ghana to be awarded a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate for Responsible Forest Management.

At least 10% of the trees planted are indigenous species, and all the remaining natural forest is protected. Special attention is given to the streams and rivers within the reserve. Thirty metres either side of the waterways is dedicated to indigenous trees, creating buffer zones that play an important role in protecting biodiversity and regulating evaporation and rainfall.

To some extent, this counters the argument that timber plantations or reserves are not forests but industrial tree cropping operations.

Form International, Form Ghana and SFI Tanzania,



In January 2016, Form Ghana completed a harvest of 3,000m³ of quality teak from its Asubima Forest Reserve.

which is replicating Form Ghana's model in developing teak plantations in the East African region, are all showing a way forward. But it would be a serious mistake to underestimate the challenge that the forests of Africa and the world still face.

Nearly one-third of the world's potential forest cover has been cleared, and one fifth of potential forest cover degraded. The World Rainforest Movement (WRM) claims that 80% of the world's original forests have already been logged and around 13m ha of forest lost each year in the last decade.

The WRM adds that between 2000 and 2010 in the three areas with most of the tropical forest – the Amazon basin, the Congo basin and south and south-east Asia – net loss in forest areas has been biggest in South America and Africa, at 40m ha and 34m ha respectively.

These regions are followed by south and southeast Asia where 6.8m ha of forest were felled, most of it in Indonesia where clearance has been driven by the palm-oil industry.

In his 2015 book, *On the Edge: The State and Fate of the World's Tropical Rainforests*, the environmentalist Claude Martin says that of the 100m ha of land converted to farming from 1980 to 2000, more than 83% came from clearing rainforest.

But it is not just the pressures of deforestation for farmland that is concentrating minds; there is also the issue of illegal logging. Alison Hoare of the policy research institute Chatham House suggests that more than 100m³ of timber are cut illegally each year, destroying 5m ha of forest.

Whether or not Ghana's illegal logging picture is similar to other African countries is a moot point. When *African Business* spoke to Samuel K Nketiah of the Ghana branch of Tropenbos International, he said that little illegal timber was exported from the country, but that for every three legal logs being felled and exported, two illegal logs were being felled for local saw mills producing wood products for the domestic market.

Seeds of hope

However, the conference heard from Mahama Ayariga, Ghana's minister of environment, science and technology, who announced a new policy that would see every schoolchild in Ghana planting at least one tree – an encouraging note to end proceedings. As the late Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai once noted: "When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and hope."

Stephen Williams