



The SAFORGEN Network



Signing in 2001 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA) and SAFORGEN

History

Forests in sub-Saharan Africa continue to disappear in spite of many reforestation and conservation efforts, and the threats to trees in the region continue to grow. At least 2000 tree species are at risk in sub-Saharan Africa, and many of them are of current or potential value to rural people. Most of the genetic

resources that are lost with disappearing populations are irreplaceable. They have not been characterized and their potential have not been documented.

Scientists from many African countries met in Dakar in 1997 and in Ouagadougou (Senegal) in 1998 to identify highly important tree species with multiple uses.

SAFORGEN MEMBER COUNTRIES

Benin	Madagascar
Burkina Faso	Mali
Chad	Niger
Republic of the Congo	Nigeria
Ethiopia	Senegal
Gambia	South Africa
Ghana	Sudan
Guinea	Togo
Kenya	Uganda

The initial list consisted of 302 species and those species that were mentioned by at least ten countries were identified for priority action within the SAFORGEN network which was about to be created.

SAFORGEN—the Sub-Saharan African Forest Genetic Resources Network—was established in 1999 to combine and share expertise among African national programmes working on forest genetic resources, identify gaps in existing forest tree conservation and utilization programmes and mobilize support for research, development and implementation actions to safeguard and sustainably use African forest genetic resources.

SAFORGEN's goal

To enable people and institutions in sub-Saharan Africa to maintain and make the best use of forest genetic resources by developing an effective networking platform.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of SAFORGEN are to:

- To assess the dynamic processes that shape forest genetic diversity from the population to the landscape level
- To develop strategies, methods and tools for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity, with a particular focus on the intra-specific diversity
- To disseminate knowledge and information about conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources among both international and national fora, in partnership with national programmes and subregional networks.

SAFORGEN's approach

SAFORGEN promotes collaboration and catalyzes action among national, regional and subregional institutions to bring about the effective conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in sub-Saharan Africa.

Collaboration among countries

Research activities focus on priority species groups: food species, medicinal and aromatic species, wood and fibre species and fodder species. Working Groups have been established for the first two of these species groups. Collaboration among countries takes place within the Working Groups, where research proposals and other collaborative activities are jointly developed and implemented.

Multidisciplinary approach

SAFORGEN members come from a wide variety of disciplines and represent a variety of organizations, including public and private research organizations and NGOs. The range of expertise allows SAFORGEN to address complex research issues requiring a diversity of scientific disciplines.

Some achievements

Reinforcement of institutional frameworks and national programmes on forest genetic resources

- Development of national plant genetic resources programmes have been supported through national workshops in member countries
- Regional training workshops have been held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in 1998, Nairobi (Kenya) in 1999, and Adama (Ethiopia) in 2008
- Young African forest scientists have been supported in their research through the Abdou Salam Ouédraogo Fellowship. The fellowship is granted annually and is managed by Bioversity's Capacity Development Unit
- SAFORGEN's scientific activities provide individual training opportunities: two fellowships were awarded for PhD students, one each in 2008 and 2009 to students from Kenya and Uganda for research on *Prunus africana*. Bioversity's

research on *Prunus africana* and related training projects are funded by the Austrian Government.

Promotion of collaboration among countries

- Two SAFORGEN Working Groups have developed a consensus on their terms of reference: the Medicinal Tree Species Working Group in Cotonou (Benin) in December 1999; the Food Tree Species Working Group in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in December 2000
- The Food Tree Species Working Group was given new direction by participants at the second workshop in Cotonou in December 2007
- Participants in the third Food Tree Species workshop, Ouagadougou, February 2009, agreed on a near-final version of information leaflets on key species.

Generating knowledge and developing methodologies and tools

- The conservation status of six SAFORGEN priority species has been determined: *Afzelia africana* and *Khaya senegalensis* (fodder tree species in Benin), *Alstonia boonei* and *Nauclea latifolia* (medicinal tree species in Togo) and *Dialium orientale* and *Tamarindus indica* (food tree species in Kenya) (Technical report published in 2002)
- A study of the phylogeography of *Prunus africana*, its genetic diversity and conservation status and identification of suitable conservation sites for the species is under way
- A book documenting edible forest fruit species in Cameroon was published in 2006
- A technical report documenting fruit tree species in East Africa is available from the SAFORGEN Secretariat
- Posters on pollinators and reproductive biology of *Irvingia gabonensis*, *Vitex doniana* and *Dialium guineense* have been published

- An assessment of the role of Tree Seed Centres in the conservation of the forest species diversity has been completed.

Organization of the Network

National Coordinators

SAFORGEN National Coordinators are appointed by their home governments and are responsible for coordination of SAFORGEN activities in their respective countries. Where applicable, they play the secretariat role of the national forest genetic resources committees.

Steering Committee (SC)

The SC is composed of SAFORGEN National Coordinators and representatives of subregional forestry organizations. The SC meets every three years, subject to the availability of SAFORGEN funds.

SAFORGEN Secretariat

The secretariat is hosted by Bioversity International. It provides logistical support to the other bodies, including recording minutes of all meetings, and collaborates with National Coordinators and the four WGs. It collects, analyzes, publishes and disseminates useful information to member countries and develops public awareness documents.

Working Groups

SAFORGEN operates through four Working Groups: Food Tree Species (FTS), Medicinal Tree Species (MTS), Fodder Tree Species and Wood and Fibre Species. Each Working Group has country Focal Points nominated by the SAFORGEN National Coordinator.

Past and current partners

- AFREA:** Association of Forestry Research Institutions in Eastern Africa
- AFORNET:** African Forest Research Network
- BFW:** Austrian Federal Research and Training



The SAFORGEN Network The SAFORGEN Network

Contact person:

Oscar EYOG MATIG
SAFORGEN Programme Coordinator
c/o CIFOR Central Africa Regional Office
PO Box 2008 Messa,
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Tel: (237) 22227449, 22227451 ext 1040
Fax: (237) 22227450
O.eyog-matig@cgiar.org

- Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscapes: (Austria).
- CIFOR:** Centre for International Forestry Research
- CIRAD:** International Agricultural Research Centre for Development, France
- CORAF:** West and Central African Council for Agricultural Development
- ICRAF:** World Agroforestry Centre
- INIA:** National Institute for Agricultural and Food Scientific Research and Technology, (Spain)
- DFSC:** DANIDA Forest Seed Centre, (Denmark)
- FORNESSA:** Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa
- SADC/FSTCU:** Southern African Development Community/Forestry Sector, Technical Unit. ■



ISBN 978-84-694-3166-5

