REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

MINISTRY OF LANDS AND FORESTRY

Rwanda National Forestry Policy 2018

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COMIFAC	Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Central
DFMP	District Forest Management Plan
EACCP	East African Community Climate Change Policy
EAC	East African Community
EICV	Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages
EDPRS2	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II
FMU	Forest Management Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGCRS	Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy
ha	hectares
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
m^3	Meters cubed
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFMP	National Forest Management Plan
NFP	National Forest Policy
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
odt	oven dried tonnes
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
REDD+	(United Nations Programme on) Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TOFo	Trees Outside Forests
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Foreword

This forestry policy is indorsed to review the existing forestry policy of 2010 to boost its impact on the economic and ecological functions of Rwanda. The Forest resources have been playing and are still playing important roles to the country's economy and supporting the livelihood of Rwandans. The country has identified the crucial role forests have to play in its development agenda. Forests provide primary energy source, mainly as domestic cooking energy and provide the base for the country's tourism opportunities, which are targeted to generate over US$ 600 million by 2020. Rwanda's forests also protect watersheds, downstream wetlands and support agriculture. However, due to dense and rapidly increasing population on a fragile land resource, forests have been threatened by deforestation and continuous degradation of forest resources

As stated in the overall goal, the policy aims at making the forestry sector, one of the pillars for sustainable development and climate resilience to improve livelihoods of present and future generations. This policy highlights very sound policy statements that geared towards quick forestry contribution to economic development to address issue of poor management of manmade forests, low productivity and low private investment in value addition to forest products. This will be achieved as the forest resources are viewed as source of income that greatly contribute to Rwandan economy and community livelihood.

The forestry policy is rooted in the national constitution and it is aligned with other national policies and strategies such the National Strategy for Transformation, vision 2020, Green Growth and Carbon Resilience Strategy, Landscape restoration initiative etc. Furthermore, this policy will enable the forest sector of Rwanda to integrate into international programs like the Agenda for sustainable development, the UNFCCC which include REDD+, the Bonn challenge, the Natural Capital Accounting and other regional and international conventions.

This policy promotes in situ soil conservation through agroforestry and forest landscape restoration of which Rwanda has pledged to restore two million hectares and enhances Rwanda's green growth while ensuring that forest are sustainably managed through full compliance with social and environmental safeguards The government of Rwanda will continue to honour its commitments in regards to forest and its biodiversity conservation. Therefore, we urge Rwandan population to own this policy and the International Community to support its implementation.

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Executive summary

By utilization of reliable domestic and outsourced technologies in forestry, forest resources will be managed to play an integral role in supporting Rwanda's development goals for sustainable, low-carbon and climate resilient to improve livelihoods of present and future generations.

The revised National Forest Policy is in line with national and international development framework and it addresses all aspects of cross-cutting issues that appear in conventions, treaties and regional/international programmes which the Government of Rwanda has committed to. It defines the government's medium to long-term intentions for the development and management of the national forest resources in the following seven policy statements:

1. The capacity of forest institutions and actors will be enhanced to match the requirements for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM);
2. Ensure Sustainable Forest Management through the establishment and implementation of integrated forest management plans at all levels;
3. Private sector will be encouraged to increase their investment in forestry sector;
4. Appropriate regulatory instruments will be developed and implemented to ensure sustainable and efficient biomass supply;
5. Biodiversity and ecosystems services and values will be enhanced in accordance with national and international agenda;
6. Active participation of stakeholders in Sustainable Forest Management to ensure ownership and proper benefit sharing;
7. The adoption of Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest (TOFo) techniques will be enhanced to contribute to overall forest resources and agriculture productivity.

The features of each policy statement such as main drivers, targets and potential policy actions are identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rwanda acknowledges the invaluable role of the forestry sector in the livelihoods of the population though it has not yet reached its full economic and ecological potential. The national forest landscape displays two major types of forests clearly differentiated by their physical features and roles; these are natural forests and manmade forests. Both types may address at the same time economic and ecological roles but at different levels.

Natural forests which cover 11.9 % of total national land area are endowed with the ecological role such as biodiversity conservation. Likewise, the management challenges they are facing can be addressed locally or in partnership with international community since the outcomes are profitable as well to Rwandans and to other population worldwide.

With the conservation effort, Rwanda has set a target to increase its forest cover to 30% of the total country land area through afforestation and reforestation by 2020. To date, 18.7% of total area has been allocated to forest plantations of which the main role is to satisfy the needs of the population in terms of biomass energy, timber and service wood. It is also worth noting that the aforementioned role is complemented by agroforestry.

Over the last centuries, vast forest areas worldwide have been deforested to meet the needs of a growing population. About 30% of global forest cover has been cleared and further 20% has been degraded. This has led to a significant reduction in biomass, biodiversity and ecosystem services from forests. The area of natural forests in Rwanda has declined since 1990s, due to the high demand for agricultural land and settlements.

However, the efforts to halt forest loss and increase forest cover have been underway since 2007. These efforts include gazetting one more natural forest into national park, rehabilitation of degraded forests and intensive tree planting campaigns.

1.1 Rationale

National forest resources are limited in nature, their sustainable utilization deserves steady follow up and continuous update underlying policies and strategies in the changing local and global environment. The 2010 national forest policy highlighted the involvement of the private sector in the management of forests for higher value addition of forest products, and this revised policy will continue promoting private sector involvement to meet the target of the National Strategy for Transformation. The revised national policy is aiming at laying down the foundations of the utilization of reliable domestic and outsourced technologies in the forestry sector. It highlights the leading role of private sector in forest management and value addition.

At the national level, the revised national forest policy is in alignment with other policies and Government statements and strategies like the National Strategy for Transformation, Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy, Forest Landscape Restoration initiative, Agroforestry Strategy etc.

At the international level, this national forestry policy will create an enabling cooperation, align with and tap into regional and international conventions and agreements which the Government of Rwanda has committed to. It will clarify more the linkages and relationship with international initiatives such as the Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNFCCC processes which include REDD+, Bonn Challenge and Natural Capital Accounting.

2. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Ministry in charge of forests does have the most direct authority over forest resources; it carries out its mandate in collaboration with other Ministries:

1. Ministry in charge of Agriculture develops and implements agriculture intensification programme using agroforestry practices;
2. Ministry in charge of Energy responsible for alternatives sources of energy to reduce pressure on forest resources;
3. Ministry in charge of Local Government responsible for mobilization of communities to implement forest programme;
4. Ministry in charge of Industry promotes wood industry, tourism and wildlife conservation;
5. Ministry in charge of Education responsible for research, education and other professional training;
6. Ministry in charge of Finance and Economic Planning integrates Natural Resources Management and Environment into sector planning towards effective national programme implementation;
7. Ministry in charge of Gender plays a leading role in the implementation and mainstreaming of gender into all sectors.

2.1 National development programmes

2.1.1 National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1)

The National Strategy for Transformation prioritizes the promotion of sustainable management of natural resources and environment to transition Rwanda towards a Carbon neutral economy. In regards to this priority the strategy emphasizes on strengthening forest management and ensure their sustainable exploitation in collaboration with private sector. Furthermore, it supports the promotion of wood industry by orienting tree species planted towards commercially viable, and decrease the number of households depending on firewood as source of cooking energy.

2.1.2 Vision 2020

Vision 2020 has a pronounced focus on private sector participation in the economy. Forest products are identified as areas to consider by investors. In addition, several topics to the cross-cutting issues on natural resources, environment and climate change namely:

- Explicitly identifying climate change as a major environmental problem and mitigation as mandatory;
- Depletion of biodiversity;
- Degradation and pollution of swamps, wetlands and waterways;
- Reducing utilization of biomass energy.

Broader Vision 2020 targets relating directly to the forest sector overall are:

- Improved livelihoods through job creation;
- Increased value-added of forest products and revenue from forest utilization;
- Enhancing the balance of benefit streams towards sustainable yield and ecological conservation.

2.1.3 EDPRS II

The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II), stresses environment and climate change as one of its five important cross-cutting issues. Included in its attention are:

- Improving the environment management and reducing vulnerability to climate change impact;
- Increasing and sustainably managing ecosystems and forest resources to optimize their economic as well as ecological functions.

The strategy identifies forest sector's role as a contributor to GDP and specifies an increase in forest sector jobs. Another forest sector targets are a country-wide forest cover of 30% by 2018, woody biomass reduced to 50% of national energy consumption by 2020 and 10.25% of the country's territory managed as protected area.

2.1.4 GGCRS

Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (GGCRS) of 2011 cuts across different sectors with focus on climate resilient and low carbon economy.

Among the GGCRS's Guiding Principles related directly to forestry is Sustainability of the Environment and Natural Resources. The strategy formulates programme of action for sustainable forestry, agroforestry and biomass among others.

2.1.5 The linkage of the NFP to other National policies

This policy is in line with other sector policies that deal with natural resources and environment:

Agriculture policy: The agriculture sector holds a key role in sustaining efforts to improve agricultural productivity and addresses the challenge of soil degradation through promotion of agroforestry practices and forest management.

Land policy: National land policy stresses that the agroforestry should be part of the agricultural landscape on the hills, given the fact that it contributes to soil protection.

Energy policy: Rwanda energy policy recognises the need to shift consumption from biomass based energies to clean energies like electricity and LPG that will reduce pressure on forest resources.

Biodiversity Policy: National biodiversity policy considers the rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems in Rwanda as an urgent and major task that requires the commitment of significant resources from both national budgets and other sources.

Environment Policy: Rwanda's environmental problems are associated with bad management of natural resources such as land, forests and water.

Wildlife Policy: Rwanda's wildlife protected areas significantly contribute to the production of global public goods and services, such as protection of biodiversity, climate stabilisation, carbon sequestration and global waters. The policy stresses that any adverse impacts on the ecosystems can dramatically and negatively alter humans' capacity to survive.

2.2 International development programmes

Around the globe, forests address and resolve critical environment related issues. Forests therefore, attract attention and deliberation in many international organisations and fora that are translated into conventions, treaties and programmes to support agreed targets, common approaches and collective resource mobilisation to resolve these issues.

2.2.1 Sustainable development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda was held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015 and adopted a resolution "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Rwanda was chosen to host the Africa Sustainable Development Goals Centre expected to drive innovation and research towards achievement of the SDGs in Africa.

Rwanda's forest policy is in full harmony with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moving the forest sector's policy, strategies and practices towards more sustainable levels will ensure that SDGs are achieved.

Goal 15 deals with protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable management of forests. Significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management shall be mobilised. Goal 13 "Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss" requires that climate change measures be integrated into national policies and strategies. The cross-cutting Goal 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empowerment across the full range of SDGs.

2.2.2 Paris Agreement

On 12th December, 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties signed the agreement to hold the increase in the global warming goal of well below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial averages.

Under the agreement, signatory parties will be supported to contribute to mitigation of climate change and to adapt to its impacts. Countries are encouraged to take action to implement and support the existing framework as set out in related guidance and decisions already agreed under the Convention for:

- Policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+);
- The role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.
- Gender equality and empowerment.

2.2.3 Bonn Challenge

The Bonn Challenge (2011) is a global aspiration to restore 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded lands by 2020. In 2011, Rwanda made its pledge to the Bonn Challenge to restore 2 million hectares. This represents proportionally the highest national commitment to the challenge.

The greatest opportunity for meeting Rwanda's commitment may reside within agriculture landscapes. The critical importance of agriculture to households and the national economy and the potential co-benefits associated with "agroforestry" constitute a major impetus for this approach. Agroforestry is the most wide-reaching restoration opportunity in Rwanda.

Other options for meeting its Bonn Challenge restoration targets include natural regeneration taking place in forest reserves and other protected forests, as well as lakes, streams wetland riparian areas and targeted forest planting to stabilize or restore steep sloped land.

2.2.4 Natural Capital Accounting

Rwanda is one of the World Bank's core implementing countries for Natural Capital Accounting. The value of non-market services will be determined in the forestry landscapes. This will underpin the central role of natural capital in economic output and the importance of the environmental services of the forests.

Through the application of natural capital accounting mechanisms Rwanda will be able to produce a "balance sheet" of the natural wealth and assets that underpin the generation of "incomes" which is already accounted for in GDP accounts. The full contribution of forests that arises from services rendered to areas such as land, water and habitat conservation, carbon sequestration and air filtration becomes obvious only when they are recorded in natural capital accounts.

2.2.5 Other International Conventions

Rwanda ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and has developed a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in this context. Improving environmental stability for natural ecosystems and restoration of degraded ecosystems and other key objectives of the NBSAP to be achieved in 2020 include:

Target 5: The rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation are significantly reduced.

Target 7: Areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably to ensure conservation of biodiversity.

Target 14: Ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

The main causes of national biodiversity loss shall be addressed by mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the decision making process across all governmental, civil society, private and externally supported forest sector initiatives.

Rwanda ratified the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) in June 1980 to control trade of endangered plant and animal species and further, the country ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation (UNCCD) in October 1998 to control land degradation where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

2.2.6 Regional Conventions

Policy statements are consistent with the African Union Agenda 2063 (Africa We Want) which is a "global strategy to optimize use of Africa's resources for the benefits of all Africans". Agenda 2063 serves as a source of inspiration for development of national and regional sustainable development plans. The agenda calls for urgent actions on climate change and the environment, implementation of the programme on Climate Action in Africa, including sustainable forest management programmes. Destruction of forests in a country has impact on the whole region but in order to curtail such risks, the present policy provides for collaboration with neighbouring countries in protecting trans-boundary forest ecosystems.

Moreover, Rwanda is a member of various regional fora and organisations related to the development of forest resources and climate change like Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC), dealing with conservation, sustainable and concerted management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa Region, East African Community (EAC), among others having an EAC Climate Change Policy (EACCP), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) dealing with among others climate change and natural resources and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) which is a regional platform for multi stakeholder dialogue, information sharing as well as joint planning and management of water and related resources in the Nile Basin.

2.3 Guiding Principles

The underpinnings for formulating policy include guiding principles that influence its content and implementation. They build on legal, political and development priorities, but also on environmental, technical, social and commercial factors that have become

embedded in the culture and expectations of Rwandan society. The core principles guiding this policy are therefore the following:

Contribution to national economy: The contribution of the forest and timber sector to the national economy will be increased by promoting value addition on all steps of the supply chain starting from efficient forest management to efficient timber processing and sophisticated manufacturing of timber end products.

Livelihoods enhancement: Improvement of livelihoods and fighting poverty shall be a major goal in all strategies and actions in the forest sector.

Integrated approaches: As key components of landscapes, forests shall be managed in an integrated way to achieve the multi-functional goals of landscape and watershed management. Coordination of management of all types of land use is essential.

Sustainable forest management: All forest and tree resources in Rwanda shall be managed to yield sustainable streams of social, economic and ecological goods and services.

Biodiversity conservation: Forest reserves shall be managed in ways that improve biodiversity and habitats for wildlife.

Private sector involvement: There will be a systematic phasing in of the private sector to play the dominant role especially in forest management and forest products processing, the public sector retaining only the regulatory function, research and quality assurance.

Non-timber forest products: Forests shall be managed to deliver products beyond woody material like nuts, honey, seeds or basic substances for medicine.

Forest management planning: Management of forests shall be in accordance with approved management plans to achieve objectives stated therein, irrespective of ownership.

Agroforestry: Agroforestry shall be mainstreamed and promote multi-purpose tree species delivering wood, fodder, fruits and fixing nitrogen. The focus shall be on species diversity including both native and exotic species.

Forest research: To the extent practicable, key decisions on forest management shall be supported by fundamentals of forest science, supported by appropriate knowledge emanating from research.

Gender and equity: Actions to redress gender inequalities and disadvantaged groups shall be integrated in all forest management plans.

International obligations: All strategies and actions in the forest sector shall internalise forest-related international and regional conventions, agreements and protocols; transboundary cooperation is to be pursued in case of ecosystems, landscapes and watersheds extend over borders of neighbouring countries.

3. SECTOR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.1 Forest livelihoods and economic contributions

The forest sector plays a big role in job creation. The largest proportion of employment is generated by charcoal production (61.8%) followed by wood production (19.2%), both located in the production areas, while distribution and selling cover 6% and 12.8% of the generated employment, respectively. A report on Rwanda's biomass sector estimated that, for 2007, the value of firewood and charcoal added US$ 122 million to national GDP (about 5%).

Tourism being a growing industry in Rwanda has, in 2016, generated almost US$ 404 million and therefore considered as Rwanda's largest earner of foreign exchange, and is dependent on mountain gorillas in the Volcanoes National Park, and the preservation of the Nyungwe, Mukura-Gishwati and Akagera National Parks.

3.2 Forest biomass supply

Rwanda's main energy source is biomass, sourced mainly from on-farm trees and plantations of fast growing eucalyptus trees. Approximately 98.5% of primary energy in Rwanda comes from biomass, in the form of firewood (83.3%) and charcoal (15.2%), together with smaller amounts of crop residues and peat (0.8%) (Source: EICV 4 carried out in 2013/14). The previous national forest policies identified the prevailing wood supply/demand imbalance. However, they recognized the potential of land to be converted into forest and possibilities of improvements of agroforestry systems to increase biomass availability and reduce pressure on existing forest resources.

Excessive pressure on private and public forests leads to over-exploitation and poor productivity and stocking. The absence of organization and skill of small land owners'/ farmers limits achieving maximum yields from their woodlots. However, several measures are proposed to curb the issue of biomass supply/demand imbalance such as promoting green charcoal production, improved cook stoves (ICS), Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and other sources of energy.

3.3 Challenges and opportunities of the sector development

The forest sector has been growing over the recent decades and will continue to grow using available opportunities to overcome challenges and significantly contribute to the national development as expected.

3.3.1 Challenges

The sector development faces multiple challenges as listed below:

Excessive and illegal cutting of forests: The high demand of forest products led to poor harvesting practices and over exploitation of forest especially in private owned forests which constitute the highest portion of the national forest cover. Consequently, frequent soil erosion was observed and washes the top arable land resulting in poor soils quality and reduced crop yield on eroded land.

Uneven distribution of forest resources over the country: Most of the forests are located along the Congo-Nile Ridge. The rest of the country has a wood deficit dominated by scattered small private woodlots of less than half a hectare (0.5ha).

Low productivity of existing manmade forests and poor quality of forest genetic material: The population pressure on forest resources leads to unsustainable utilization and practices. Existing forest plantations have been created in the past few years and most of them underwent a coppicing regime whose stamps have been exhausted due to short harvesting rotations. Poor quality tree seeds which are not well adapted to specific agro ecological zones are the ones which have been used mainly because of less use of research findings, inadequate extension services and lack of seed strategy.

Low involvement of the private sector: efforts to manage and increase planted forest productivity requires investments which are generally difficult to justify because of relatively high risks and uncertainties and relatively long term returns on investment. This leads to low involvement of private sector in the whole value chain of forest management and value addition.

Predominance of one species and poor agroforestry practices: More than 80% of the species used in reforestation and afforestation is dominated by Eucalyptus species. Relying on monoculture constitutes a real threat to the sustainability of our forestry sector, in case of outbreak of diseases or pests. Despite the existence of various agroforestry species, few of them are adopted by farmers.

Land for reforestation and afforestation: Land for new forest plantation is becoming scarce due to the competition with other land uses.

Limited technical capacity in the sector: Limited number of skilled human resources and extension agents is a strong barrier to the capacity building of forest owners to be able to make use of available forest management practices. The absence of organization and skills of small land owners' / farmers limits achieving maximum yields from their woodlots.

3.3.2 Opportunities

The forest sector features attributes and opportunities favourable to the development of a productive and profitable forest resources. These include:

- High level political will illustrated by putting in a place institutions with a clear mission to develop the forest sector and create favorable investment facilities;
- Overarching policies and strategies prioritize green growth development, biodiversity, climate change and afforestation/reforestation which promote landscape restoration approaches;
- Compliance with regional and international conventions and agreements will lead to access to climate finance, green bonds for private sector participation in the forest sector and other sources of funding;

- Environmental protection ranked among national priorities and mainstreamed in all economic development sectors for efficient carbon credits and low carbon development;
- Many sector policies, programs and projects deal with environment, biodiversity, food security, energy, watershed management, land management or landscape and forest restoration with forestry as one of the key interventions;
- Made in Rwanda program and support accorded to private sector to lead sector development to explore opportunities in forest landscape restoration, forest value addition and non-timber forest products;
- Increased awareness of environmental services of forest ecosystems and the initiation of payment for ecosystems services for their sustainability;
- High linkages in integrated programs from different sectors like forest landscape restoration, integrated water resources management, agriculture, etc.

4. FOREST POLICY VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Vision

Forest resources will be managed to play an integral role in supporting Rwanda's development goals for sustainable, low-carbon and climate resilient to improve livelihoods of present and future generations.

4.2 Overall objective

The overall objective is to define, in concise statements, government's medium to long term intentions for the development and management of the national forest resources.

5. POLICY STATEMENTS

The policy statements are high-level governance instruments that clearly state the medium to long-term targets for forestry sector.

Policy Statements

No.	***Policy Focus***	***Policy Statement***
Policy Statement 1	***Institutional Capacity***	The capacity of forest institution and actors will be enhanced to match the requirements for sustainable forest management.
Policy Statement 2	***Sustainable Forest Management***	Ensure Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) through the establishment and implementation of integrated forest management plans at all levels.
Policy Statement 3	***Private Sector participation***	Private sector will be encouraged and supported to increase their investment in forestry sector.

No.	*Policy Focus*	*Policy Statement*
Policy Statement 4	***Woody Biomass Energy***	Appropriate regulatory instruments will be developed and implemented to ensure sustainable and efficient biomass supply.
Policy Statement 5	***Forest Ecosystem Conservation***	Biodiversity and ecosystems services and values will be enhanced in accordance with national and international agenda.
Policy Statement 6	***Participatory Forest Management***	Active participation of stakeholders in Sustainable Forest Management to ensure ownership and proper benefit sharing.
Policy Statement 7	***Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest (TOFo) Development***	The adoption of Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest (TOFo) techniques will be enhanced to contribute to overall forest resources and agriculture productivity.

Features of each policy statement such as main drivers, targets and potential policy actions are identified in the following sections.

5.1 Institutional Capacity

Policy Statement 1: The capacity of forest institution and actors will be enhanced to match the requirements for Sustainable Forest Management.

5.1.1 Institutional capacity policy drivers

The efficient management of public and private forests depends on suitable forestry, institutional and human resource capacity. Low capacity should be viewed as a barrier to Sustainable Forest Management. Forest institutions must be supported and continuously strengthened in order to accomplish their mission. Small forest land owners require a suitable level of forest management skills to ensure that their forests are managed properly.

5.1.2 Policy actions

This section gives a highlight of the most important areas of intervention to focus on during the implementation of this policy.

1. Strengthen Institutional and human resources capacity at all levels to understand SFM principles and practices;
2. Build capacity of tree seed centre and integrate forest research into the institution in charge of forest management to be able to deliver the high quality planting material adapted to the different agro-ecological zones;
3. Improve and ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of the forestry sector;

4. Strengthen extension services to ensure the implementation of forest management plans;
5. Support Districts, Sectors, Villages and Civil Society groups to implement forestry related management plans;
6. Liaise with national and international higher learning institutions for continuous short and long term courses related to forestry;
7. Strengthen the capacity of charcoal makers for sustainable production.

5.2 Sustainable Forest Management

Policy Statement 2: Ensure SFM through the establishment and implementation of integrated forest management plans at all levels.

5.2.1 Sustainable Forest Management policy drivers

Rwanda's forest land is not fully covered by forest management plans. In many cases those that are in place are not adequate related to technical deficiencies, inaccurate or out-of-date inventory and other data or because they have not been updated and no longer reflect the expected outcomes.

Forest Management Unit (FMU) approach which is a delimited area composed by a set of different forest stands that constitutes an economic unit to be managed sustainably will be applied in private and public forests.

5.2.2 Policy actions

This section gives a highlight of the most important areas of intervention to focus on during the implementation of this policy, particularly for this policy statement.

1. Mainstream Forest Landscape Restoration and Green Growth and Climate Resilient Strategy (GGCRS) principles into National Forest Management Plan;
2. Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Forest Management tools;
3. Formulation and implementation of NFMP and DFMP as well as Forest Management Unit guidelines.
4. Providing special attention to the areas with forest deficit in order to increase forest resources and productivity

5.3 Private Sector participation

Policy Statement 3: Private sector will be encouraged to increase their investment in forestry sector.

5.3.1 Private Sector participation policy drivers

Sustainable forest management (SFM) requires substantial financial resources. Rwanda needs to explore and encourage all sources and mechanisms of funding for the forest sector to achieve SFM. The private sector is expected to play the lead role in afforestation, management, transformation and marketing of timber and non-timber forest products and services.

A variety of private sector actors, all with different interests, capabilities, and constraints, influence the forest sector, including:

- Large multinational companies;
- Local companies of varying sizes;
- Individual private investors;
- Community or cooperative enterprises.

Support of private investment in forestry sector may be addressed through two complementary ways:

- Support the long term concessions of public forests to private investors;
- Support of small scale private owners in establishment of new forests, rehabilitation of degraded forests.

5.3.2 Policy actions

This section gives a highlight of the most important areas of intervention to focus on during the implementation of this policy, particularly for this private sector policy statement.

1. Avail information on forestry investment opportunities to the private sector;
2. Develop effective Public Private Partnership (PPP) around forestry sector;
3. Create and pilot contracts for private sector service providers for:
    - Forest tree seed collection;
    - Tree seedling nurseries;
    - Forest site preparation and planting;
    - Forest stand tending (thinning, pruning, pest control, etc.);
    - Forest management.
4. Support organization and capacity of association/cooperative of small forest owners to turn their woodlots into economically viable FMUs (Forest Management Units);
5. Develop and support wood-based industries development.

5.4 Woody Biomass Energy

Policy Statement 4: Appropriate regulatory instruments will be developed and implemented to ensure sustainable and efficient biomass supply.

5.4.1 Woody Biomass Energy policy drivers

Above 80% of Rwandan population depends on biomass energy. In some areas almost 100% of households use fuel wood as sole source of cooking energy.

In 2015, the total demand in woody biomass has been estimated around 5,3M odt, while the total sustainable supply around 2.3M odt. This large gap leads to significantly increased pressure on forest resources.

This section gives a highlight of the most important areas of intervention to focus on during the implementation of this policy, particularly for this policy statement.

5.4.2 Policy Actions

1. Ensure the implementation of the biomass energy strategy;
2. Mainstream wood biomass energy management into forest planning;
3. Regulate and promote the wood biomass energy production and use; Development of "green" charcoal and wood pellets to replace traditional charcoal;
4. Promote "green" energy technologies.

5.5 Forest Ecosystem Conservation

Policy Statement 5: Biodiversity and ecosystems services and values will be enhanced in accordance with national and international agenda.

5.5.1 Forest Ecosystem Conservation policy drivers

Virtually all of the programmes discussed above as part of Rwanda's international development context have a pronounced focus on some aspect of ecosystem management and integrity or biodiversity conservation. To support these, the NFP demonstrates that Rwanda's forests are being managed and enhanced according to the practices that ensure compliance with the criteria under which these international programmes are meant to be funded and implemented.

5.5.2 Policy actions

This section gives a highlight of the most important areas of intervention to focus on during the implementation of this policy, particularly for this policy statement.

1. Manage and maintain forest resources to ensure biodiversity conservation and sustainable provision of ecosystem goods and services;
2. Develop management plans for all protected forests and ensure their implementation;
3. Identify and protect threatened species;
4. Rehabilitate degraded forests to improve ecosystem values;
5. Introduce Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) to ensure rational use of forest ecosystem services such as drinking water, hydropower, agriculture, mining, etc.

5.6 Participatory Forest Management

Policy Statement 6: Active participation of stakeholders in Sustainable Forest Management to ensure ownership and proper benefit sharing.

5.6.1 Participatory Forest Management policy drivers

There is a wide range of goods and services provided by forests, at local, national and global levels. Divergent claims with different interests and objectives create conflicts amongst users. To deal effectively with this, broad-based participatory and inclusive processes have to be used when forest programmes and plans are developed and implemented. Benefits have to be distributed in a way that motivates the population to maintain the forests. All groups shall have the possibility to ensure their rights and shall have equal opportunities to markets, jobs and participation in decision-making.

5.6.2 Policy actions

This section gives a highlight of the most important areas of intervention to focus on during the implementation of this policy.

1. Ensure participation of all stakeholders in forestry related planning and implementation programs;
2. Develop forest management plans that ensure the participation of local communities and specifying shared benefits
3. Mainstream gender and youth equity into forest related development and decision making processes;
4. Develop and disseminate participatory forest management guidelines;
5. Strengthen forestry stakeholder consultation platforms;
6. Develop transparent procedures for conflict resolution;
7. Strengthen information sharing mechanisms.

5.7 Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest

Policy Statement 7: The adoption of Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest (TOFo) techniques will be enhanced to contribute to overall forest resources and agriculture productivity. **5.7.1 Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest policy drivers**

Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest (TOFo) include trees in cities, on farms, along roads and in many other locations which are by definition not a forest. All trees make a contribution to the environment and to the social and economic well-being of humankind.

5.7.2 Policy actions

This section gives a highlight of the most important areas of intervention to focus on during the implementation of this policy.

1. Develop and implement agroforestry strategy;
2. Develop and implement urban forest management plan;
3. Mainstream trees outside forest practices in forest management planning processes;
4. Put in place mechanism for incentives to attract private land owners to plant forest trees on their land.

6. ADDITIONAL SECTOR IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Implementation Plan

Joint working relations between key stakeholders shall ensure the concerted implementation of the policy under a shared responsibility. A thematic working group assembling key stakeholders in the forest sector will be held regularly to evaluate and monitor the implementation of this policy together with other strategies and plans available in the forest sector. The following are actors with their responsibilities for the effective implementation of this policy:

6.1.1 Central government

The Central government has an overall responsibility to coordinate inter-ministerial issues in the sector, developing and ensuring that this policy is implemented and that all key player are implicated in the implementation. The central government will provide and mobilize required financial resources for implementation of this policy and ensuring that legislation governing the sector are coherent.

6.1.2 Local Government

The main responsibility of the local government will be to ensure that orientations, guidance from the central level are well internalized and that DFMPs are well implemented at local level. Furthermore, the local government will emphasis on the law enforcement to meet guidelines and regulations for the effective forest management

6.1.3 Private sector

As for the government target to involve more private sector in the forest sector, the main role of private sector will be to promote value addition of wood industry and effective forest management through co-management and concessions. Private sector will contribute to boost trade of forest products.

6.1.4 Communities

Communities will play role in the implementation of this policy by adopting best practices of forest management of their woodlots through Forest Management Units,

they will adopt and implement agroforestry technologies that enhance soil productivity and participate in the forest conservation and protection.

6.1.5 Non-Governmental Organizations

NGOs will have responsibilities to assist the government, private sector and communities in implementing, monitoring and evaluating sustainable forest management, mobilize and provide financial resources to implement actions and Delivering education, training and bridging courses to local communities and forest extensionists.

6.1.6 International and National financial institutions and development partners

Financial institutions have a critical role to play in the forestry sector, by enabling investors and entrepreneurs to access funding to start and expand their businesses in forest sector. Furthermore, development partners will have responsibilities in providing financial support to the government and other organizations willing to support and advance the forest sector

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Policy is implemented through the strategic plan and action plans that are formulated to translate policy into actions. The Forest Sector Strategic Plan is a guiding document to be monitored. The later updates strategies, identifies outcomes, and prescribes activities that are designed to achieve the intent of this NFP.

In addition, Rwanda National Forest Management Plan (NFMP) and District Forest Management Plans (DFMPs) that have been developed, will play an important role to implement the NFP in particular to address the current critical issues of forest management. The plans will be also monitored to assess how progressively the sustainable forest management is being achieved.

6.3 Economic implications

In the medium to long term interventions, the successful implementation of the NFP will have a noticeable impact on the economy.

A. Promotion of wood industry

The emphasis of the NFP appears to encourage forest industrial plantation, wood based industry through involvement of private sector. Forestry operations are to be undertaken in a "business-like" manner through investments into wood-processing.

B. PES and Non timber forest product

The intent of the NFP is also to put focus on Non-Timber forest products, for instance, "bio prospecting" – searching for plant species or honey as sources of commercially exploitable products including medicines which is a potential revenue stream.

Revenue streams from tourism, bioprospecting and other non-consumptive uses of the forest stand will be recognized for their economic value. Attracting tourists to natural forests and settlements, and providing them with a distinctive leisure experience, also helps build the nation's image as an environmentally responsible destination, potentially extrapolated by the visitors into their business and investment decisions (Ecotourism / community-based tourism).

C. Private sector implications

The intended outcome of NFP includes significant participation of private sector actors across almost the full range of forest activities. It is anticipated that incentives will be created to attract actors from household level, community cooperatives, small and medium enterprises and international investors.

To attract private sector investors, avenues for participation in planning and potential contract incentive mechanisms will be provided, including eventually preferred concessionary access to forest resources where specific employment, transformation, energy efficiency, or value-added criteria are met. Efforts will be made to identify and disseminate potential opportunities in the forest sector activities.

6.4 Financial implication

This policy will have financial implications in terms of budget needed for investing in different programs. The aggregate funding for forest sector development and management activities includes both domestic and external sources. Resource Mobilization for the implementation of the forestry policy has been and will be targeted from seven principle sources:

- *Internal public investment resources:* this entails national budget allocation to the Environment and Natural Resource sector and specifically the forest sector through MINILAF and RWFA;
- *On-going project funds*: resources from on-going projects will be aligned to relevant outputs and outcomes in the strategic plan and allocated as part of the programming and financing reform towards programme-based budgeting;
- *Donor sources mobilized into basket fund*: Funding is expected to be mobilized through the Sector Wide Approach. This will be strengthened by partnerships from Environment and Natural Resource Sector Working Group; more funds to support the forest sector will be generated through the development of project proposal that will be submitted to different donors.
- *Non public sector resources*: Additional funds are expected directly and indirectly from non-state intervening agencies specifically the international NGOs, faith-based organizations; local NGOs and private sector investments;
- *Cross-sector collaboration*: Some of the outputs are expected to be implemented by or in collaboration with other sectors. For instance, additional funds are expected to come from MINAGRI, MININFRA, as well as District authorities.

- *Private economic operators:* investing in forestry sector since this policy strongly supports the running of the forestry sector in business manner
- *Revenues from sale of public mature forests and income generated from private investment in wood industry;*
- *Payment for Ecosystem Service (PES):* this policy intend to introduce the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) to ensure rational use of forest ecosystem services. Moreover, the feasibility of water funds scheme which establish a payment system for downstream users of water (e.g., irrigation, drinking water) to support upstream efforts to protect forest is being assessed. The PES and Water fund scheme will be an innovative financial mechanism to protect and preserve watersheds' forest on which the country's economy and community livelihoods depend.

6.5 Legal implications

Some changes of the provisions of the law governing the management of forest sector should be anticipated though earlier amendments and enactments have produced a regulatory framework that does support most of what is advocated in the NFP.

6.6 Social implications

Overall, the most significant outcome of this NFP is the long-term enhancement, sustainable management, and conservation of forest and forest land resources for present and future populations which is now a more assured outcome.

Further outcome of the policy is the increased level of social cohesion, economic security, and personal well-being potentially arising from increased levels of forest sector economic activity, ecosystem integrity and services, and capacity to deal with climate change threats and shocks.

In Rwanda, gender and equity constitute guiding principles for development in any sector and are embedded in each of the forest sector's governing documents. The "participation" targets in the Policy Statement 6 ensures that "gender" has a voice in forest sector development.

6.7 Handling Plan

The Ministry of Lands and Forestry (MINILAF) with its affiliated agency of Rwanda Water and Forest Authority (RWFA) will take the lead in disseminating this policy to the general public and in particular to key interested stakeholders for smooth implementation. RWFA forest extension services will play important roles in unpacking and bringing the policy to the grassroots levels.