



## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **GBEP Activity Group 4**

#### **ECOWAS Workshop on Sustainable Wood Energy Management**

## 1. Background

ECREEE, with the support of the Austrian Ministry of Forestry, Water and the Environment, ADA and AECID and the Government of Niger organised the ECOWAS Capacity Building Workshop on Sustainable Management of Forest (SMF) with a focus on REDD+ 27-29 April 2015 in Niamey, Niger. The workshop provided information and enhanced the overall capacities of relevant actors within the forestry and wood energy value-chain.

At the end of the workshop, the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop were reached as agreed by all the participants. The recommendations and conclusions can be read at (web link to be included in due time).

In the implementation of the workshop recommendations and conclusions, ECREEE is partnering with GBEP to further the cause of promoting sustainable wood energy management, that GBEP already has an Activity Group under the Working Group on Capacity Building (WGCB) for Sustainable Bioenergy. The purpose is to build synergies, share experiences within the two institutions expert groups and promote modern and sustainable wood energy management by bringing out success stories in various parts of the world.

In December 2013 GBEP decided to establish within the WGCB for Sustainable Bioenergy, the Activity Group 4 *“Towards sustainable modern wood energy development”* under the leadership of FAO, UNEP and UNF/GACC. It was agreed to adopt a stepwise approach, with the following initial activities:

- ✓ Stock taking paper regarding successful initiatives on solid biomass development in developing countries.
- ✓ Webinar to present the stock taking paper and exchange lessons learned.
- ✓ Capacity building workshop on lessons learned on wood energy development.

During the November 2014 meeting of the GBEPWGCB, the session dedicated to the Activity Group 4 was opened by a presentation of the stocktaking paper *“Towards sustainable modern wood energy development”* by ECO Consult, who conducted the study generously funded by GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation). The paper was well received by the participants and it was felt necessary to undertake further discussions on the recommendations and the next steps. FAO, a co-leader of the AG4, guided the discussions through a webinar which focus on the recommendations of the report and how to address them.

One of the recommendations agreed during the webinar is to focus on the necessary efforts for increasing the formalization of the wood energy sector in developing countries and how to contribute to building a positive image for small scale wood energy, which is fundamental for creating an enabling environment surrounding this sector. In order to discuss in detail the aforementioned recommendations it was proposed to organize this workshop where success stories are exchanged between neighbouring countries and/or countries with similar contexts in order to facilitate the transfer of these experiences and their replication.

## 2. Rationale for the proposed workshop

This event brings together experts on wood energy from government sector, environment and forestry, policy makers and representatives of the financial institutions, both public and private, that work towards the replication of the strategies and procedures that have proven effective in developing country contexts and similar to those reported in the GBEP stocktaking paper.

Additional success stories on wood energy management within the ECOWAS and other regions as well as those compiled by the GBEP Secretariat through a template circulated among the AG4 members and webinar participants will be presented and discussed during the meeting.

This event will discuss the main aspects that have been singled out as key for the sustainable development of the sector in Africa and elsewhere:

- **Institutional, legal and regulatory framework:** Introduction of legal and regulatory mechanism to ensure sustainable production, transformation and use of wood energy;
- **Image change:** modifying the negative image of the wood energy sector (particularly small scale) is a precondition for stakeholder's involvement in the structural change process and policy reform;
- **Sector's formalization:** under multiple aspects, the formalization of the wood energy sector is fundamental for understanding the extent and magnitude of its dynamics;
- **Successful financial mechanisms and business plans for sustainable wood energy value chains:** in addition to national and international financing mechanisms to support woodfuel related projects, this workshop will discuss financial platforms (public, private, and/or PPPs) and connect local actors with resource persons in the various financial mechanisms to discuss how to i) shorten the application process to access funding; ii) find low alternative transaction costs for small and local projects to be executed; iii) identify a harmonized region-wide approach to financing large and medium-term programmes for sustainable wood energy management;
- **Promotion of wood energy value chain approach in existing wood energy, sustainable land management and forestry projects.**