



KNUST



International conference. First announcement and call for abstracts and panel proposals

Sustainable Woodfuel Value Chains in Africa: Governance, Social, Economic and Ecological Dimensions

23-25 NOVEMBER 2021, KUMASI, GHANA

Woodfuel (charcoal and firewood) constitutes over 70% of the energy needs for cooking and heating in sub-Saharan Africa. The consumption is on the rise due to population growth, poverty and urbanization. The production is accessible to a large number of households, yet characterized by poor harvesting and processing practices.

The woodfuel sectors in most sub-Saharan African countries are characterized by a high degree of informality. There are on-going efforts in most countries to formalize the sector, that is, to organize, regulate and control the production and trade, typically under the heading of sustainability. These plans give stronger roles to institutions of the state to control the production and trade through permits, taxes, and enhanced controls. However, attempts at formalizing the sector without an intimate understanding of the ecological, social, and economic contexts within which the production and trade take place, run the risk of failure or may compromise woodfuel-dependent livelihoods. Sustainable woodfuel production and trade remains a contested issue and big challenge in Africa that needs to be tackled urgently and collectively with all stakeholders involved.

At its 22nd session held in March 2020 in South Africa, the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9317en/ca9317en.pdf>) requested FAO to support the compilation, analysis and dissemination of good practices for sustainable charcoal production as well as the adoption of alternative sources of energy and recommended that FAO support countries in the formulation and implementation of national charcoal strategies. Indeed a number of organizations have been working in the sector with the aim of generating knowledge and evidence to support decision making for sustainable woodfuel production and consumption. This conference will provide an opportunity to discuss current knowledge, practices and experiences and best ways forward.

Conference objective and themes

The objective of the conference is to promote understanding and sharing of knowledge, good practices and solutions among and between scholars, practitioners, private sector and policy makers on sustainable and equitable woodfuel value chains and to advocate and explore strategies for their scaling-up.

The conference focuses on the following themes:

- Wood fuel production and use: Environmental impacts and sustainable pathways
- Socio-economics of woodfuel value chains: Resilience, trade, livelihoods and health
- Governance, including policy, legislation, institutional mechanisms and justice in the woodfuel sector

Participants

The conference seeks to bring together participants with different backgrounds and perspectives to the thematic areas of the conference. Participants include:

- Policy makers (local, national, regional and international levels)
- Forest and farm producer organizations and associations, trade and other value chain actors (including women and youth)
- Traditional/customary institutions (land and wood resource custodians)
- Private sector, including manufacturers of improved biomass energy and cooking systems, trading organizations
- Researchers and academia
- Civil society and professional organizations
- Technical and financial development organizations

The conference will provide a forum for engagement and interaction with peers as well as engagement and interaction between scholars, policy makers and practitioners across government, and non-government organizations, producer organizations, private sector, research as well as the media. The conference will hold different tracks: academic, policy and practice sessions as well as plenum debates.

About the conference

The conference will be held at the campus of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in the city of Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Kumasi is easily reached by public transportation from Accra, the capital of Ghana.

The conference is hybrid, allowing participation with physical or virtual (on-line) presence. If a hybrid conference is not possible due to continued COVID-19 restrictions, the conference will convert to full virtual conference.

Simultaneous interpretation between English and French will be available.

See more on <https://ifro.ku.dk/english/events/2021/international-woodfuel-conference/>

Call for abstracts

We invite participants to submit abstracts. Abstracts must relate to one of more of the thematic areas of the conference.

In line with the objective of the conference, we welcome three types of abstracts: academic, policy, or practice.

Type of abstract	Description (examples)
Academic	Abstract describing original research. It can be theoretical or empirical, experimental or observational.
Policy	Country papers, considerations on national policies and strategies implementation, national or sub-national legislation.
Practice	Business cases, evaluations, innovative approaches towards clean cooking, effective ways in enhancing supply capacity and reducing demand, reliable cooking fuel supply with minimum environmental impacts in displacement settings, sustainable production and restoration, etc.

We welcome submission of individual abstracts as well as proposals for panels. The latter constitutes 3-4 abstracts under a common theme.

Abstracts must be in English or French and not more than 300 words. The abstract must include type (academic, policy, or practice), the title, name(s) of the author(s), institutional affiliations and contact details (e-mail). Panel proposals should include a short description of the topic and titles and names of all presentations and speakers and facilitator(s) in the panel. We encourage gender balance in the proposed panel speakers.

Submit your abstracts and panel proposals to axconference2021@gmail.com before May 3, 2021.

The organizers have funds to support a limited number of participants to attend the conference in person (travel, accommodation and conference fee). Please indicate when submitting your abstract if you would require financial support. Decisions on acceptance of abstracts will be communicated before June 1, 2021, at which time registration for the conference will open.

Expected outputs

The conference aims to publish selected papers from the conference in a special issue of an international peer-reviewed journal. The conference will produce a policy brief with key messages and recommendations from the conference and key concerns on sustainable woodfuel production in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, a report with a collection of good practices on sustainable woodfuel production and value chains will be included into the wood energy database managed by FAO, and published in the Nature & Faune Journal, a publication of the FAO Regional Office for Africa. The outcomes of the conference will be disseminated at the 23rd Session of the AFWC to be held in early 2022.

Organizers

The conference is organized by a consortium of research institutions and networks (CIFOR, ICRAF, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Copenhagen, AFORPOLIS and IUFRO) and with support of FAO. The conference is organized in close collaboration with the Government of Ghana, namely the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Environment, Technology and Innovation, the Ministry of Energy, the Ghana Energy Commission, the Ghana Forestry Commission and the Ghana Environmental Protection Agency.