

**WORKSHOP ON OPERATIONALIZING AFRIOCAT:
AN IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE NETWORK ON SUSTAINABLE LAND AND
WATER MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA**

FINAL REPORT



Participants of the AfriOCAT Consultative Meeting (©Photo by TerrAfrica)

29-31 May 2018, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania



Introduction

The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, hosting the TerrAfrica Partnership, organized a workshop on the operationalization of AfriOCAT. The meeting program was comprised of:

1. **The official opening session**
2. **Setting the stage**
3. **The strategic orientation**
4. **The way forward and closing ceremony**

The objectives of the workshop were to: (i) provide the background on the establishment of AfriOCAT; (ii) share best practices for established networks; (iii) establish the steps required to operationalize the network; and (iv) develop a clear roadmap on the way forward for the effective operationalization. There were 29 participants consisting of 5 females and 24 males. Participants were mainly from government ministries, civil society and research organisations. Twenty-two (22) African countries were represented, specifically: **Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.**

Background

At the end of the 17th World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) network meeting held in Feldafing, Germany, the African delegates signed a communique to establish Africa continental OCAT (AFRIOCAT), a network of African collaborators committed to the use and further development of WOCAT. The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency joined the discussion on AfriOCAT with the purpose to involve more African countries in the network and make it operational. It is within this context that AfriOCAT was launched during the 13th United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD Conference of Parties (COP 13) in Ordos, China. The meeting recommended to organize the first AfriOCAT Meeting to establish a functional AfriOCAT network. Following this launch, the NEPAD Agency, hosting the TerrAfrica Secretariat, organized a consultation meeting on the operationalization of AfriOCAT from May 29-31, 2018 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

1. Official Opening Session

The workshop was opened with remarks from Mrs. Rudo Makunike (Senior Programme Officer Sustainable Land and Water Management at the NEPAD Agency), and additional remarks from Mr. Zwide Jere (Interim Chairperson of AfriOCAT), and Mrs. Anna Lawuo (Coordinator Coastal Forest Project, Tanzania). On behalf of the NEPAD Agency and the TerrAfrica Secretariat, Mrs. Rudo Makunike welcomed participants to the workshop and thanked the Tanzanian government for hosting the workshop. She articulated the important role that natural and environmental resources play in the development of African economies. As a result, their degradation threatens the objectives of food security and poverty alleviation in addition to robbing communities of their sustained livelihoods. Therefore, there was need to have the requisite information and knowledge about technologies, approaches and best practices on land degradation interventions. She explained that the NEPAD Agency through its TerrAfrica Partnership was determined to support member countries in this regard by providing the leadership and needed resources. She expressed hope that this support would result in the commensurate action that is needed in the form of the right policies to address land degradation across the Africa continent.

Mr. Jere in his remarks mentioned that AfriOCAT aimed to operationalise WOCAT within the African context. He emphasized given the worth of knowledge and peculiar challenges on the continent it was important to come up with a network that would harmonise African approaches and technologies on SLWM. He thanked the NEPAD Agency for the partnership and urged participants to come up with concrete ideas to move the network forward. Mr Jere made an appeal for the involvement of the youth and women in science given that Africa is losing its current crop of scientist.

Mrs. Lawuo welcomed participants to Tanzania and urged them to feel at home. She highlighted the negative effects of climate change and said a lot of money was being invested to address the issue but sometimes information and its sharing was a constraint. In this regard, she expressed her satisfaction about the workshop which aimed to operationalise a network for information and experience sharing. She reiterated her strong hope that the workshop would come up with concrete solutions and resolutions to help AfriOCAT move forward.

2. Setting The Stage

Presenters were:

- Mr. Nzigiyimpa Leonidas, Member of AfriOCAT Interim Steering Committee
- Dr. Joy Tukahirwa, Uganda LandCare Network (ULN)
- Mr. Wuletaw Abera, International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT Ethiopia)
- Mr. Emmanuel Seck, Environment and Development Action (ENDA Energy)

Prior to the presentations, Mr Cheikh Tidjane N'dongo, Program Officer Knowledge Management from the NEPAD Agency, took participants through the agenda for the meeting highlighting the objectives and expected outcomes.



The first speaker, Mr. Nzigiyimpa Leonidas from Burundi, presented the background of AfriOCAT. He mentioned that AfriOCAT was established at the 17th WOCAT network meeting held in Germany by the African delegates who attended. There were 15 delegates from 10 African countries who signed the communique to establish AfriOCAT with the aim to provide a network of African collaborators committed to use and further develop WOCAT. He highlighted the values of the network and the benefits that member organisations will gain upon joining. Membership to AfriOCAT is open to all members of WOCAT international across Africa and to those involved in sustainable land and water management as organisations or individuals. He articulated currently, there is an interim AfriOCAT steering committee whose primary function is to provide leadership for the full realisation of the network's goals and objectives. The committee consists of six members from six African countries. He informed participants about the progress made by the interim committee in compiling a draft strategy and a concept note for funding.

The second speaker, Dr. Joy Tukahirwa, informed participants that UGACAT (Uganda Conservation Approaches and Technologies) is a partnership between an NGO (Uganda LandCare Network) and Ugandan Government. This partnership which has generated great benefits seeks to promote documentation, knowledge use and sharing to support adaptation, and decision making in SLWM. The rationale is to bring together all relevant stakeholders to establish a multi-stakeholder platform that document SLWM practices using the GIS infrastructure and local technicians/extension to build a robust information system for the benefit of all. She emphasised the importance of equipping facilitators who will be working at the community level and mentioned that Uganda LandCare Network in partnership with WOCAT is implementing a project in northern Uganda (a region with a history of war) to build resilience to the impacts of climate change. The project aims to train extension teams who define and map land degradation problems, and document SLWM practices to establish a database. There are currently 73 technologies and 5 approaches under documentation and this information can be found on the WOCAT website: <https://www.wocat.net/en/global-slm-database/>.

The third speaker, Mr. Wuletaw Aber, gave a presentation on the experiences from EthiOCAT (Ethiopia Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies). He mentioned that the EthiOCAT book was launched in 2010 based on activities in Ethiopia and information contributed by EthiOCAT members. The 25-page book documents technology in the country with the associated picture, result, and data. In total, there are 52 technologies and 27 approaches that have been documented. However, only 35 technologies and 8 approaches have been screened as best practices and presented in the EthiOCAT book. These technologies and approaches will be used in the scaling up of land management interventions in the country. The book will be regularly revised and updated by an expert group to incorporate new approaches and technologies.

The last speaker, Mr. Emmanuel Seck, mentioned that Environmental Development Action (ENDA) was established in 1972 to work on issues related to environment and development. The focus of the NGO is to drive the developmental agenda through an environmental lens. He explained that ENDA works closely with academia and technical institutions and has several projects and programmes that are ongoing. Further, he cited the work done through the DryNet network is based on the Africa Program and African civil society coalition on SLWM for

capitalizing, publishing and putting on line best practices on SLWM which are available on <http://endaenergie.org/bonnes-pratiques/> and <http://www.africa-adapt.net/en-us/>. He highlighted the importance of scientific validation alongside documenting the best practices, the change of scale has to take into consideration the strengthening of the partnership with the government institutions and finally it was clarified that ENDA can serve as a potential hub for sharing best practices between communities, NGOs through identified accurate tools.

During the country experience sharing session, representative from Senegal, Benin, Nigeria, DRC, and Niger recounted their respective experience on setting up a network for SLWM. It emerged that in most countries there are existing institutions and organisations that are currently involved or can be leveraged for the purposes of setting up the network. It was also emphasised that AfriOCAT will not substitute existing in country SLWM initiatives but rather be used as a platform for documenting best existing and new approaches and technologies using the UNCCD accredited WOCAT tools so that these can be shared in a harmonized way among policy makers, implementers, academia and others to further advance SLWM across Africa at local, country, regional and continental levels.

3. Strategic orientation

Presenter: Mr. Cheikh Tidjane N'dongo, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NEPAD Agency).

The presenter highlighted the proposed or existing strategic objectives of AfriOCAT to capture:

- ✓ Improving learning and sharing among member organisations and individuals;
- ✓ Increasing collaboration and synergies amongst members;
- ✓ Developing key knowledge products which will lead to influencing policy reforms at the local, regional and national levels to support up scaling of SLWM;
- ✓ Increasing visibility of SLWM in programmes and projects. He also briefly presented an overview of the proposed structure for AfriOCAT.

Following the presentation, the session's moderator Mr. Everisto Mapedza from International Water Management Institute (IWMI), formed two groups to discuss how to better define the work AfriOCAT will be undertaking in terms of organisation and the different steps to follow to better implement the objectives of the network. Group 1 was tasked to discuss membership and governance while Group 2 was to discuss the strategic direction for the network. After reviewing the outcomes of the group discussions during plenary, participants agreed on a numbers of points which are summarized under item 4 below.

4. Way forward

During the first part of this session, Mr. Cheikh Tidjane N'dongo presented a proposed framework for operationalising AfriOCAT. The framework highlights the strategic orientation, the governance structure and a clear roadmap for the network. During the discussion session, participants made important contributions towards a shared understanding an accepted framework by participants:

A. Strategic Orientation

- a. **Support documentation of SLWM interventions at continental, regional and country levels in a standardized and harmonized format** for sharing, this will help:
 - Support a mechanism for documentation of technologies and approaches;
 - Support the monitoring and evaluation of SLWM interventions;
 - Identify pre-requisites for a mapping of the SLWM interventions to better sensitize the stakeholders related to SLWM issues;
 - Provide capacity building support for documentation.

WOCAT DATA BASE/LDN (support evidence based decision-making)

- b. **Develop a Community of Practice** including African research institutes, universities, NGOs, women, young people and stakeholders taking actions on SLWM at regional and national levels. **WORK OF THESE AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS**
- c. **Improve communication on SLWM best practices and approaches** to reach the local communities to combat desertification and fight against climate change threatening their livelihoods.

B. Simplified Governance Structure

- d. **Membership:** stakeholders involved in SLWM in Africa such as continental and regional institutions, technical and financial partners engaged in information and data sharing in this issue;
- e. **National level:** AfriOCAT to be reflected at national level based on the ongoing work in countries and/or with already existing platforms;
- f. **Institutional arrangements:** the NEPAD Agency to serve as interim Secretary with the role of supporting a simplified governance structure with the:
 - **Set up of a governing body for AfriOCAT** which will be responsible for validation of proposed actions to be taken and meet every two years to discuss the progress and approve reporting to be presented at the WOCAT International Symposium on implementation of activities in Africa;
 - **Set up of an interim committee** which will work on rules of procedures, institutional arrangements and financing mechanism to effectively operationalize AfriOCAT;
 - **Set up thematic ad-hoc groups** in emerging issues for knowledge management (at a later stage) every year such as the nexus of SLWM-Climate Change, SLWM-Agriculture, SLWM-Migration, SLWM-Resilience and Food Security, SLWM-Energy, SLWM-Peace and Security, SLWM-Technology transfer, SLWM-Resource mobilization.

Thus to move forward the operationalization of the AfriOCAT network, it was recommended the following steps are taken:

- NEPAD to share the report of the operationalization of AfriOCAT with participants as well as the larger group such as strategic partners which will serve as starting point for engagement;
- Further engagement with WOCAT will need to be pursued to determine how to synergize with WOCAT to support a better use of the WOCAT data base and leverage resources;
- The role of the AfriOCATEERs, especially the founding members, will be to incorporate the elements shared during the Operationalization of AfriOCAT Consultative Meeting in the draft strategy to become a more finalized version, define the strategic documents to prepare the work of the governing body by *December 2018*;
- Within two years, the interim committee, coordinated by the NEPAD Agency, taking into consideration women and youth, will be composed of representative from the:
 - Regions
 - NGO
 - Private sector
 - Research institute
 - Regional Institution
 - University
 - Financial partners
 - Founding members of AfriOCAT.

5. Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony of the meeting was performed by Mr. Cheikh Tidjane N'dongo. On behalf of the NEPAD Agency and the TerrAfrica Secretariat, he expressed gratitude to the government of the United Republic of Tanzania for hosting participants and its unquestionable commitment to addressing the issue of land degradation and desertification. He also thanked participants, the team of facilitators, and the NEPAD TerrAfrica team for making the meeting a success and to remain engaged in the operationalization of the AfriOCAT network.

Annex 1: Agenda of the meeting

Annex 2: List of participants