



SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: S1

Enhancing Ecosystems Services in Tree Commodity Agroecosystems in Africa

Hosts:

	Title	Name	Organisation	E-mail
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Abstract:

Tree commodities in Africa, including cocoa, coffee, oil palm, shea butter, rubber, tea, on-farm timber, contribute significantly to the economies of most African countries, both at macro and micro level. These commodities support the livelihoods of millions of people and constitute an important part of the African economies. At least ten countries in Africa are single tree commodity-dependent economies. Even at the global level, African countries contribute significantly to the production of these commodities. Approximately, 75% of the total global cocoa is produced in West Africa, Kenya is the leading black tea exporter in the world, and Ethiopia contributes significantly to the global coffee exports, among others.

There is a growing global demand for most of these crops, which calls for increased production. Over the last three to four decades, increase in production for most of the crops, mainly tea, coffee, cocoa and oil palm has primarily been achieved through increasing area under production. There is also evidence that these commodity systems have flourished at the expense of forests and come with several other externalities– social (e.g. land conflicts, land grabbing), climate (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions) and environmental (e.g. biodiversity loss– including soil micro-organisms; human health impacts from pesticides use). Climate change, in turn, poses a significant threat to some of the commodities in parts of Africa. As global demand for these commodities continues to soar, expansion is also being limited by land scarcity – necessitating innovations in the production systems. These innovations ought to go beyond intensification practices aimed at increasing yields through the use of fertilizers and pesticides since these practices left unchecked also harms the ecosystems. Massive innovations will be needed for these systems to respond to today’s climate change as well as social, economic and environmental challenges. In addition to innovations within the production systems, policies,



regulations, standards, and other incentives intended to enhance and/or support sustainable practices ought to be promoted within African countries. The sustainability of these commodities goes beyond the producing countries to export countries. Hence, the need for sustainable value chains if ecosystem services within tree commodities are to be enhanced.

Goals and objectives of the session:

1. To bring together first-hand experiences on the major innovations around sustainable tree commodities systems within Africa.
2. To discuss how different policies, practices, standards, regulations and agreements can be implemented at country-level, continent-level or even at a global level to enhance ecosystem services within these commodities in Africa.
3. To present first-hand findings based on a book on Tree commodities in Africa currently being developed by World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF); the book is in the final stages of development.

Planned output / Deliverables:

1. Based on the session, an opinion piece shall be developed, jointly with session participants.
2. Summarized and well-informed policy briefs will be designed based on the discussions and shared with policymakers in the respective African countries.

Voluntary contributions accepted:

Yes, I allow my abstract to be submitted to my session for review

Related to ESP Working Group/National Network:

[Sectoral Working Groups: SWG 1 – ES in Agricultural production systems](#)