



FORESTRY RESEARCH NETWORK FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

CONSTITUTION

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ARTICLE 1: NAME AND SCOPE OF ACTION

- 1.1 The Network is known as Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa, with acronym **FORNESSA**.
- 1.2 The Network is a non-profit, non-governmental scientific organisation open to forestry and forest-related organisations and individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa.

ARTICLE 2: GOAL

The goal of the Network is to foster forest science knowledge sharing and cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa for the greater benefit of people and biodiversity

ARTICLE 3: OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Advance institutional and individual forestry research capacity of the member institutions;
- 3.2 To foster cooperation in forestry research among member organisations;
- 3.3 To provide a platform for forest science knowledge sharing for human development and ecological sustainability.

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Membership Categories

4.4.1 Institutional Membership

The membership includes forest research organisations and forest-related science organisations which apply for membership and are accepted by the Steering Committee.

4.4.2 Individual Membership

This encompasses individual scientists or researchers from member (or non-member) institutions that are engaged or have been engaged in research on forest and other forest-related subjects and who wish to participate in

FORNESSA activities.

4.4.3 Student Membership

Students who are pursuing studies in forestry or forest-related courses and who wish to participate in FORNESSA activities.

4.4.4 Honorary Membership

Persons from or outside the region who have rendered particularly important service to the Network may receive honorary membership. The General Assembly approves their appointments on recommendation of the Steering Committee.

4.2 Admission to Membership

Admission to membership shall be decided by the Steering Committee.

4.3 Termination of Membership

4.3.1 A member may voluntarily terminate membership to the Network in writing to the Steering Committee.

4.3.2 Failure of the member to pay membership fees for three consecutive years.

4.4 Rights of Members

Members are entitled to:

4.2.1 Participate in General Assembly meetings;

4.2.2 Submit reports or papers for upload unto FORNIS website;

4.2.3 Receive information and publications from the Network;

4.2.4 Be eligible to be appointed and serve as FORNESSA office holders upon approval of the Steering Committee;

4.2.5 Member institutions shall have the right to appoint representatives to participate and vote in meetings.

- 4.2.6 Participate in all scientific meetings and trainings organised by FORNESSA and/or held under its auspices.

4.5 Duties of members

Each member has a duty to:

- 4.5.1 Promote FORNESSA
- 4.5.2 Observe its constitution
- 4.5.3 Pay membership fees regularly and punctually

ARTICLE 5: ORGANS AND STRUCTURE

5.5.3 Steering Committee

- 5.1.1 The Steering Committee of FORNESSA is its executive organ.
- 5.1.2 The Steering Committee is composed of the President, the Vice President, the Executive Secretary, a representative from FAO, IUFRO and EFRN, and three nominated members from forestry-related sub-regional networks and CGIAR Centres.
- 5.1.3 The President and the Vice President are elected by the Network's General Assembly.
- 5.1.4 After its constitution, the Steering Committee will reach out to appoint three more representatives who will take charge of regional interests (West & Central Africa, Southern Africa, and Eastern Africa).
- 5.1.5 The Steering Committee develops 5-year strategies for the Network in line with long-term strategies of IUFRO and UNFF.
- 5.1.6 The Steering Committee approves FORNESSA's budget, income and expenditure and advises on the appropriate membership fees.
- 5.1.7 If a member of a Steering Committee vacates his/her office during term of office, a replacement will be ratified by the General Assembly.
- 5.1.8 All members of the Steering Committee may participate in voting with

the exception of the President who votes to break a tie.

5.1.9 Acceptance of decisions requires a majority of votes, on the condition that more than half of the voting members are present.

5.1.10 The Steering Committee meets whenever there is a FORNESSA Congress, or on the President's or at least one-third of its voting members' request.

5.1.11 Members of the Steering Committee deliberate and advise the President on major issues concerning the Network's policy and strategy.

5.1.12 The Steering Committee decides on the place and appropriate date of the next Congress.

5.1.13 The Steering Committee proposes changes in the constitution.

5.2 Secretariat

5.2.1 The Secretariat is headed by the Executive Secretary and assisted by staff appointed by the host institution.

5.2.2 The Executive Secretary is appointed by the Steering Committee and serves a term of 5 years renewable upon appraisal by the Steering Committee.

5.2.3 The Secretariat sees to the business of the Network and reports to the President.

5.2.4 The Secretariat may be designated by the President to represent the Network vis-à-vis official bodies and third parties.

5.2.5 The Secretariat is authorized to sign legally binding contracts.

5.2.6 The Secretariat prepares annual workplans and budgets for approval by the Steering Committee. The workplans are based on the current strategy of FORNESSA.

5.2.7 The Network's financial matters are overseen by the Secretariat, under the supervision of the President.

5.3 President

- 5.3.1 The President presides over the Steering Committee and the meetings of the General Assembly of the Network.
- 5.3.2 The President is elected by the General Assembly and represents the Network on official bodies or third parties.
- 5.3.3 The term of office for the President is 5 years after which the person is not eligible for re-election.
- 5.3.4 The President follows up on the necessary action matters agreed upon in General Assembly meetings with agreement from the Steering Committee.
- 5.3.5 The President casts the decision vote whenever there is a tie.
- 5.3.6 The President designates the Vice President to act in his/her stead as the need may arise.
- 5.3.7 If the President is unable to carry out his/her duties the Vice President shall act as President. If the Vice President is unable to act, a President shall be appointed from the other members of the Steering Committee. This appointment must be ratified by the General Assembly.

5.4 Vice President

- 5.4.1 The Vice President performs the functions assigned to him/her by the President and acts as the President if the latter is unable to serve.
- 5.4.2 The Vice President is elected during the Congress by the General Assembly.
- 5.4.3 The Vice President is not eligible for re-election as Vice President after serving a full term.
- 5.4.4 If for any reason, a Vice President is unable to carry out his/her duties or if he/she has to assume the Presidency, the Steering Committee shall appoint an alternative from among its members to serve until

the end of the term. This decision requires to be ratified by the General Assembly.

5.5 Executive Secretary

- 5.5.1 The Executive Secretary is the head of the Network's secretariat.
- 5.5.2 The Executive Secretary performs functions assigned to him/her by the President.
- 5.5.3 The Executive Secretary is appointed by the Steering Committee to serve a term of 5 years and he/she can be reappointed for the second and last term upon appraisal by the Steering Committee.
- 5.5.4 If he/she cannot for any reason(s) perform his/her functions, the Steering Committee shall appoint another from among its members. The General Assembly must ratify this appointment.

5.6 The Congress

- 5.6.1 The Congress is the general assembly of members of FORNESSA. It is concerned with scientific, technical, policy and business matters, such as election of office holders. During Congress, the President may inform the Congress of decisions of the Steering Committee regarding the functioning of the Network. Decisions on any issue brought before members require a simple majority vote.
- 5.6.2 The Congress comprises all members based on **Article 4**.
- 5.6.3 The Congress usually meets every 5 years.
- 5.6.4 The President, the Vice President or a designated Steering Committee member normally presides in person over sections of the Congress.

5.7 Thematic Groups

- 5.7.1 The thematic activity of the Network is spread over a number of thematic groups. They are aligned to current forest sector issues.
- 5.7.2 Each thematic group has one coordinator and one or more deputy

coordinators.

5.7.3 If a thematic group coordinator fails to carry out his/her duties, the deputy coordinator will replace him/her or another member, after consultation with the respective thematic group members and approval by the Steering Committee.

5.7.4 All individual members of the Network are entitled to join one or more thematic groups.

5.8 FORNIS Webmasters

5.8.1 The FORNIS webmasters are composed of a group of webmasters and information managers of one or more FORNESSA member institutions.

5.8.2 Their duty is to maintain the FORNIS website to enhance the level of networking among FORNESSA members and also to give the Network a better visibility at both regional and global levels.

ARTICLE 6: MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are payable annually and are due by the end of the first quarter (March) of each year. The membership fee rates shall be decided by the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE 7: DISSOLUTION OF THE NETWORK

7.1 The voluntary dissolution of the Network shall be decided on by a General Assembly meeting specifically organised for this purpose.

7.2 The assets of the Network shall be transferred to a forestry institution or a forest-related science institution named by the Steering Committee. A member institution shall be appointed by the Steering Committee to be the executioner of this.

ARTICLE 8: LANGUAGES AND DIFFICULTY IN INTERPRETATION

8.1 The Steering Committee at its discretion shall publish the constitution in

other languages other than English.

- 8.2 In case of difficulty in interpretation, the English language version is considered to be authoritative.

ARTICLE 9: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 9.1 Proposed amendments to the constitution shall be circulated to members at least 10 working days prior to the general meeting at which the amendments will be discussed.
- 9.2 The amendments to the constitution must be accepted by a quorum. Copies of the amendments shall be published (see **Article 8**) and circulated to all members.

Revised and Adopted by the General Assembly, September 2020.