TFA 2020’s Action Plan on Oil Palm Development in Africa or the Africa Palm Oil Initiative (POI) is a Signature Initiative of TFA 2020. Its vision is a prosperous palm oil industry which brings jobs and wealth to local communities in a way that is environmentally and socially sustainable and protects the rich tropical forests of the region.

The goal of the Initiative is to develop and support the implementation of a set of regional principles for responsible oil palm development that take account of the ambitious development plans of countries in Africa, while addressing both environmental targets for reduced deforestation, land use and greenhouse gases, and also social indicators on issues such as land tenure and the rights of indigenous peoples. Six palm oil producing countries (i.e., Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria) are currently engaged in the Initiative and other producer countries are expected to join in the near future.

The Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 (TFA 2020) is a Public-Private Partnership which has as its principal goal to reduce tropical deforestation across the globe. Its focus is on four agricultural commodities: palm oil, soy, pulp & paper and beef products, which are estimated to account for over half of all deforestation worldwide. For more information see www.tfa2020.com

The Initiative is being coordinated by Proforest with support from a Steering Group of TFA 2020 Partners.
TFA Africa Palm Oil Initiative: The Three-stage Process in each participating country

There are three phases planned for the palm oil initiative at the national level.

Phase 1: Engagement
- Form engagement team (TFA 2020 Partners)
- Engage with governments
- Engage with local civil society
- Engage with local private sector

Phase 2: Development
- Form country team
- Organise country level workshops on principles and national action plans
- Participate in regional process

Phase 3: Implementation
- Implement action plans
- TFA 2020 Partner activities to address gaps
- Exchange information with other countries

Recent Developments in the TFA 2020 Africa Palm Oil Initiative
Since the beginning of 2015, considerable progress has been made in engaging the various stakeholders in the focal countries. Six governments have expressed a strong interest in engaging in the Initiative and now the partnership is in the process of moving from the Engagement phase to a more formal Development phase in these countries (see Figure 1). Phase 2 (Development Phase) is focused on developing national country positions that feed into regional principles for responsible palm oil production as well as developing national plans for implementation.

The Governments of Norway, United Kingdom, United States of America and Netherlands provide financial support to the TFA 2020 and its Palm Oil Initiative.

Whilst the TFA 2020 POI is not a financing mechanism, there are funds available to support the current development phase of this Initiative. Hence, government funding is not a pre-condition for engaging with the TFA 2020 Partners at this stage. However, government commitment to supporting TFA 2020’s mission and promoting responsible palm oil production is a requirement.
Phase 2: Development Phase
The goal of this phase is to develop and agree on a set of regional principles that will guide good practice in oil palm plantation development in West and Central Africa in a way that avoids deforestation and promotes efficient land use. To arrive at these regional principles, it is anticipated that each country will develop a national position on responsible palm oil development, as well as a national action plan that will direct the implementation of best practice at the country level, and which will be consistent with the regional principles (see Figure 2).

Key Characteristics of Anticipated Principles
The principles are anticipated to be a ‘compact’ set of basic directives for good practice that will contribute to reducing deforestation, acknowledge the important values of forests, promote forest governance and efficient land use, recognise tenure rights for local communities, include smallholders and encourage wider stakeholder consultations (i.e., governments, private companies, and civil society) in the palm oil sector (see TFA 2020 POI Briefing note One (July 2014) and Two (October 2014) available at http://tfa2020.com/index.php/news.

Key benefits to palm oil producer countries engaging in the Palm Oil Initiative
Actively participating in and endorsing the regionally and nationally developed principles and ensuring they are effective at the national level will provide a number of benefits including:
• Increased opportunities supporting business in the palm oil sector;
• Improved livelihoods and rural incomes;
• Balancing economic growth and conservation goals;
• Secured markets as consumer goods companies seek to source responsible palm oil;
• Improved governance (i.e., capacity within companies, governments, NGOs, communities and consultancies) and legal compliance in the palm oil sector;
• Efficient and effective land-use planning and rehabilitation of old and abandoned palm oil plantations;
• Improved consideration of smallholders in the palm oil production chain;
• Meeting national REDD+ and biodiversity commitments; and
• Climate change mitigation; avoiding the release of GHGs through avoidance of primary forest clearance.
The Development Phase Process

National- and regional-level principles will be developed mainly through a series of workshops, comprising:

A) National Workshop 1
The Country Team, under the coordination of the local focal point, will convene and organise a national workshop in each participating African country in collaboration with the Government.

Outputs
1. Overview of existing country framework and policies on palm oil production, the TFA 2020 and POI goals and objectives, as well as the POI process;
2. Draft country position for responsible palm oil production;
3. Gap analysis of the main barriers or challenges to implementing the proposed principles completed;
4. Draft Action Plan for implementation of responsible palm oil production at the national level; and
5. Nomination of three representatives to engage in the regional process (public, private, civil society).

Workshop Agenda
The workshop is expected to be divided into two main sections (possibly split across two workshops depending on the country circumstances): 1) Sensitisation / capacity building; 2) Development of country position for input into regional principles and national action plan. A series of technical input papers will be prepared for the workshop:
1. TFA 2020 commitments and expected outcomes, including summary of consumers’ and producers’ commitments in the palm oil sector;
2. Summary of government policies and framework with respect to palm oil and agriculture development;
3. Summary overview of oil palm development in country; and
4. Summary of relevant regional policies and positions as concerns agricultural commodity development (e.g., ECOWAS / CEMAC / CEEAC).

B) Regional Workshop 1
An initial regional workshop is planned with the aim of developing a generic set of principles that will guide palm oil development in the region, which participating countries of the region will potentially agree to and sign. The outputs of the national workshops will be discussed and feed into this regional workshop. This two to three day workshop will, in addition, aim to clarify what should and should not have been agreed on at the national level and the scope and breadth of the regional principles.

C) National Workshop 2
The Country Team will convene and organise a second national workshop in each participating African country under coordination of the local focal point. It will aim to give feedback from the regional process meetings and also bridge country-specific gaps that might have emerged at the regional level, mindful of TFA 2020 POI expectations, as well as refining and finalising the country position papers and action plan.

D) Regional Workshop 2
A second regional workshop is planned to take place by the end of the first quarter of 2016 to review and finalise the developed principles for validation.
Facilitation Structures, Roles and Responsibilities

The process to deliver an agreed set of principles at the regional level as well as action plans at the national level will need to be facilitated by various national and regional structures. It will be important that the structures are representative and efficient and build on existing platforms and processes where appropriate.

**TFA 2020 Africa Palm Oil Initiative Coordinator:** The coordinator’s role is to lead and oversee the process, to harmonise the process at the regional level, and to report back to the Steering Group and to all TFA 2020 Partners. Proforest is playing this coordination role.

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<td>• Agree in-country process</td>
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<td>• Final regional agreement on high level principles for responsible Palm Oil</td>
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<td>• Agree in-country structures</td>
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**Focal Point:** An institution will be selected in each country as a Focal Point to facilitate the stakeholder engagement process at the national level. The Coordinator will propose a list of focal points to the POI Steering Group, after careful consideration of a set of selection criteria. Where possible, the focal point will be an existing TFA 2020 Partner who is active in the palm oil sector. The institution that takes on the focal point role must be active and credible, able to work with all stakeholders and well connected with, and respected by, public and private sectors. In the absence of a TFA 2020 Partner matching the outlined criteria, a civil society group or private company that satisfactorily meets the criteria will be selected as the focal point.

Figure 2: A series of national and regional workshops leading to a regional accord for responsible palm oil production

Location and date to be determined
The focal point will lead/facilitate the delivery of the TFA 2020 Development Phase in-country with technical guidance from Proforest. They will be responsible for achieving the Phase 2 deliverables, including generating interest and support amongst associated stakeholders, and coordinating the series of national workshops that lead to a national position on responsible palm oil and an action plan.

**Government Point Person:** It is desirable that each government appoints a point person, if appropriate. The Government Point Person represents the government and all national interests with the POI, helps garner support for, and boosts the interest of, associated ministries and departments in the process and facilitates endorsement of regional and national principles by government.

**Country Team:** A country team, comprising the POI Coordinator, the Focal Point and the Government Point Person, together with one or two other key actors in the sector, will be established to help plan and deliver the initiative at the country level. The country team will need to have as membership at least one TFA 2020 Partner, one representative of the government, one member to represent the private sector and one member to represent civil society. The country team is designed to be representative but lean in order to be very effective in moving the initiative forward.

**Building on Existing Platforms**
The Country Team will need to engage with a much larger group of stakeholders to actively participate in the process, notably the national workshops, if the country position and action plan are to be developed in a participatory and inclusive way. Wherever possible, the Country Team will work with a relevant existing working group, platform or forum to make the process efficient, build on existing processes and give it legitimacy. For example, this might include the National REDD+ Technical Committee, the RSPO Working Group, a palm oil development association, a national climate change taskforce/group or a similar organisation. It is important that both the public and private sectors as well as civil society are represented in this group, so it may be necessary to engage with two such platforms (as is being considered in Liberia).

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