

African Ecological Futures

Scenario Development Workshop

Cairo, February 28 – March 1, 2015



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1. African Ecological Futures – An Introduction

The African Ecological Futures (AEF) project, a collaboration between the African Development Bank (AfDB) and WWF, is an effort to engage key decision makers across Africa on the future of the continent. The project investigates current trends driving change across different sectors, identifies factors that could shape different development pathways, and examines the implications of potential trajectories. The project is designed to leverage sectoral knowledge of a range of experts and influencers to understand what consequences current decisions will have on the future of Africa’s ecological resources.

1.1. Context for the African Ecological Futures Project

Africa’s growth story is likely to be one of the defining global stories of the twenty-first century. Its growth has the potential to draw millions out of poverty, expand the ranks of the global middle class and act as a site and source of new global economic growth. While the basis for the continent’s development is increasingly broad, the primary and extractive sectors still serve as a major source of export earnings, and account for a significant share of GDP and GDP growth in many countries across the continent.¹

As Africa has grown, its ecological resource base, on which future generations depend, is being eroded. Research by WWF identifies that the Ecological Footprint of all African countries increased by 240% between 1961 and 2008.² By 2015 Africa is projected to be in “bio-capacity deficit,” i.e. when the footprint (impact of a population that uses resources) is greater than the capacity of ecosystems to produce useful biological materials and absorb waste materials generated by humans.³

If Africa emulates current production and consumption models then compelling evidence suggests that its ecological system will be undermined and the quality of growth on the continent limited.⁴ There is growing concern that hot spots (areas of heavy resource depletion and even potential conflict over finite resources) will emerge across the continent that are nexus points (regions of overlap or intersection) across the various rapidly growing sectors. These points will likely suffer cumulative impacts and their erosion could have disproportionate consequences for sensitive ecosystems, and the communities that depend on them.

For these reasons, Africa needs to find a way to shift onto a new and sustainable growth path – one that meets the needs of today, without limiting the opportunities available to future generations. **To ensure sustainable growth Africa needs to understand and respond to the erosion of its ecological base.**

In many sectors today, Africa stands at a crossroads; the decisions it takes now will have enduring impacts on its people, the opportunities they will be able to access, and the environment. What are the ramifications of such decisions for Africa’s rich ecological base? How best can we reconcile and even

¹ Lions on the Move, McKinsey, 2010 p.2 referencing AfDB and Global Insight data

² Africa Ecological Footprint Report, WWF, 2012

³ WWF, Nature’s Regenerative Capacity

⁴ http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/living_planet_report/2012_lpr/demands_on_our_planet/biicapacity/

⁴ Africa Ecological Footprint Report, WWF, 2012



integrate the preservation of the ecological resource base with rapid development? Are there specific regions of interest that must be protected immediately? And are there means to influence the systems in transformation so as to achieve dual – perhaps multiple – outcomes? The AEF project aims to answer these questions.

1.2. Summary of the AEF Project Process

Phase One of AEF comprised of an in-depth look at **four major sectors – Energy, Water, Agriculture, and Extractives – and two cross-sectoral catalytic agents – Trade and Investment, and Infrastructure Corridors –** that will largely define the development pathways that Africa follows over the next half century. Each of these papers adopted a 50-year, scenario-based exploration of Africa’s potential development choices within the selected issue-area, and highlighted the concomitant implications for the continent’s ecological future. In keeping with the broader goals of the project, every paper highlighted **levers or potential points of intervention and influence that could help achieve a more sustainable, ecologically secure pathway of growth for Africa.**

Phase One concluded with a synthesis paper that drew together the salient features plus common and recurring themes of the six initial papers.

In Phase Two of the AEF project (the current phase) research is being conducted to help frame and identify the spatial implications of some of the likely development trajectories explored in the sector papers and the synthesis paper. This research – will help to highlight **how growth in the different sectors may land across ecological “hot spots” in Africa.**

Keeping such spatial implications in mind, AEF will engage key decision makers from across Africa on the development of different scenarios or futures for Africa’s ecological resource base. **This collaborative scenario-building workshop will be the foundation of the project’s final report on African Ecological Futures.**

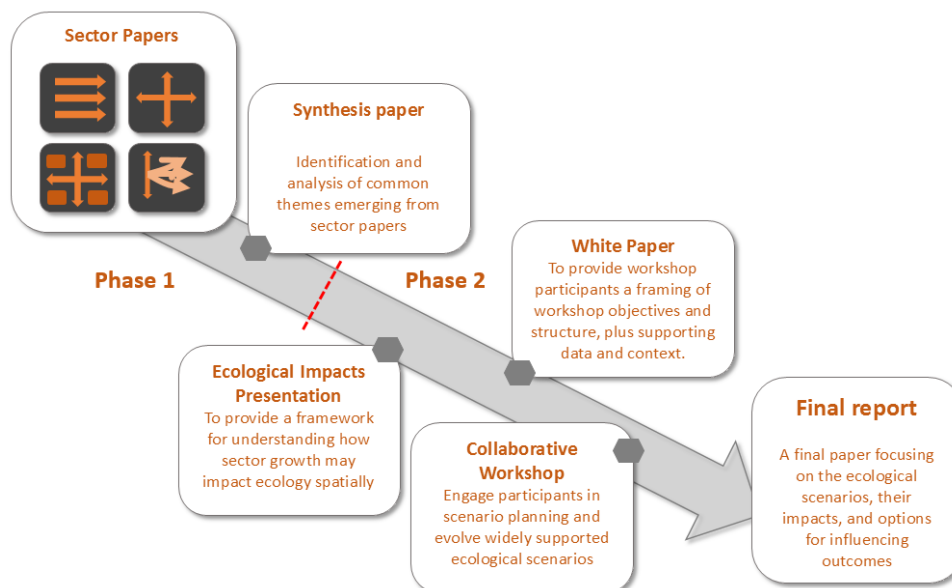


Figure 1: Components of Phase One and Two, AEF

1.3. Select Findings from the Synthesis Report

Several **drivers of growth** emerged as common factors across the different sectors (i.e. in two or more of the sector papers). These included population growth; urbanisation; changing consumption patterns driven by a rise in income or by economic growth more broadly; a change in investment patterns and levels; and increasing demand – both within Africa and globally.

Similarly, many **uncertainties** (i.e. factors or trends whose direction or applicability is presently difficult to predict) also appeared as recurrent themes across sector papers: climate change; levels of regional market integration, economic integration, and political integration; availability of investment capital; availability of finance; levels of transparency, corruption, or probity; political stability and security; the motivating factors underlying political decision-making; institutional stability and capacity; the presence of enabling policy environments or frameworks; and the level of political will to deliver on targets and commitments.

While each of the sector papers was developed independently, some common themes emerged in terms of how the sector-specific development scenarios were framed. The **critical features that defined several of the scenarios**, i.e. the continuums that underpinned how the scenarios emerged, included the following characteristics (in the affirmative as well as in the negative): devolution, equity, and access; integration of true costs in economic accounting or valuation; empowered institutions and good governance; and the prioritization of African resources for African growth.

There was also a great deal of convergence across the sectors on what kinds of **levers or tools** could be used to influence desired outcomes in these areas. They included: enabling or supportive regulatory frameworks and incentives; the use of market mechanisms and forces; information-availability to support decision-making; advocacy and public pressure for corporate responsibility; strong institutions; institutional



capacity-building and empowering civil society; regional cooperation in trade; and investment in efficient or improved technologies.

2. The AEF Scenario Development Workshop

To construct and guide the next stage of the African Ecological Futures project, WWF and AfDB are hosting a professionally facilitated **two-day scenario workshop in Cairo on February 28 and March 1, 2015**. The workshop will be attended by stakeholders from the African Union, NEPAD, AMCOW, ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA, the East African Community, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, UNEP, and the AfDB.

. Building on the work produced in the AEF process thus far, participants in the workshop will discuss the dynamics that will determine Africa's ecological future, and hone in on key uncertainties that will define plausible trajectories for the continent. Based on these uncertainties, **the workshop will build out multiple scenarios – i.e. African Ecological Futures**.

Scenario development is a valuable tool to help identify where the points of strongest leverage lie. The workshop will use scenario development to identify where, and how, decision makers can influence development trajectories and manage emerging risks. **The workshop will culminate in a shared understanding of which ecological regions across Africa are most vulnerable, and which processes are the most critical to influence in order to preserve the integrity of ecological spaces and the natural capital within them.**

2.1. Workshop Goals

The goal of the workshop is to harness expertise across Africa's most influential institutions to evolve a collective understanding of how key trends and forces central to Africa's growth have profound implications for the continent's ecological resources, and to identify opportunities to enable preferred outcomes that are responsible, sustainable, and both ecologically and economically resilient.

Specifically, the workshop will be designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Establish the linkages between growth in various sectors and the impact sectoral growth can have on ecological resources.
2. Establish the linkages between robustness of Africa's ecological resource base and the ability of various sectors to grow, based on a strong foundation of natural capital.
3. Identify the determinants of Africa's ecological future, i.e. factors that exert the most influence on what type of future the continent has in terms of the preservation of its ecological capital.
4. Develop multiple (3-4) plausible scenarios for Africa's ecological future, based on how these determinants or factors interact with one another.
5. Understand each scenario's characteristics, pros and cons, and implications (for the environment, for society, and for the economy).
6. Identify opportunities or approaches that are important to bear in mind today in various decision-making processes in order to give effect to the preferred scenarios.



2.2. Workshop Process and Outline

The two-day workshop will bring together several institutions that collectively have the ability to shape Africa's future, not only within their respective domains but in terms of the continent's ecological future – as a result of development trajectories across various sectors. The workshop will be professionally facilitated and be an extremely active and hands-on process for participants to provide expert input. Each day will be divided into three sessions, each with a specific focus, and the majority of sessions will include both plenary discussions and smaller work-groups. A broad outline of the workshop is as follows:

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2015

Session One: Introduction to African Ecological Futures (09.30- 11.00)

The opening session will provide context for the workshop, including an overview of insights developed into sector specific dynamics produced during phase one of the project. A short overview of scenario planning, and how it will be used during the workshop will also be provided.

Session Two: Key dynamics and uncertainties shaping African Ecological Futures (11.30-13.00)

This interactive session will help identify the key uncertainties that may drive African ecological futures - providing the foundations on which to develop scenarios

Session Three: Scenario Development – African Ecological Futures (14.00-16.45)

This session will provide an opportunity for participants to collaborate to construct 3-4 scenarios for Africa's ecological future. Break-out groups will be formed to help refine and enrich the scenarios.

Day one will close at 16.45. Coffee or tea breaks and lunch will be provided.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2015

Session Four: Development Trends and Ecological Implications – Spatial Interplay (09.30-11.00)

This session will begin with a short expert presentation on plausible spatial ecological impacts of African development trajectories.

Session Five: Review of Scenarios through an Ecological Lens (11.15-13.00)

This session will enable participants to enrich scenarios developed on day one with ecological dimensions indicated by the spatial analysis. This will support a discussion of potential ecological risks and opportunities arising from the scenarios.

Session Six: Opportunities to Shape African Ecological Futures (14.00-15.30)

The final session will seek to tie discussions together, identifying the key issues decision makers must bear in mind as they shape development in Africa, and what opportunities exist to influence the development of beneficial scenarios.

The final session will be followed by a cocktails and networking hour at 15:30.

The second day's proceedings will close at 16.30. Coffee or tea breaks and lunch will be provided.