

**SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD SCIENCES (SAFS)**

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TOPIC: **SWOT ANALYSIS OF RWANDA NATIONAL FORESTRY POLICY 2018**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Rwanda acknowledges the invaluable role of the forestry sector in the livelihoods of the population though it has not yet reached its full economic and ecological potential. The national forest landscape displays two major types of forests clearly differentiated by their physical features and roles; these are natural forests and manmade forests. Natural forests which cover 11.9 % of total national land area are endowed with the ecological role such as biodiversity conservation. With the conservation effort, Rwanda has set a target to increase its forest cover to 30% of the total country land area through afforestation and reforestation by 2020.Through this, Rwanda national forestry policy was established in order to play an integral role in supporting Rwanda’s development goals for sustainable, low-carbon and climate resilient to improve livelihoods of present and future generations. And to Ensure Sustainable Forest Management through the establishment and implementation of integrated forest management plans at all levels (FORESTRY, 2018).

**Key definition**

According to (FRA, 2000), a forest is a land area greater or equal to 0.5 ha, with a tree canopy cover greater or equal to 10%, which is not primarily under agricultural or other specific non-forest land use.

**Forestry** is the science and art of creating, managing, using, conserving, and repairing forests and associated resources, in a sustainable manner, to meet desired goals, needs, and values for human benefit.

**Agroforestry** is a collective name for land-use systems and practices in which woody perennials are associated with crops and or animals on the same land management unit. (Leakey, 2017)

**Swot analysis** evaluates the internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and threats in an organization’s environment. The internal analysis is used to identify resources, capabilities, core competencies, and competitive advantages inherent to the organization

**Strength**

This National forest policy could not achieve anything without collaborate with different ministries and other sectors such as:

* Ministry in charge of Agriculture develops and implements agriculture intensification program using agroforestry practices. This help to keep producing crops at highest level but not forgetting to conserve the forest by using incorporating suitable trees with crops.
* Ministry in charge of Energy responsible for alternatives sources of energy to reduce  
  pressure on forest resources. This ministry is responsible to find the other source of energy to replace domestic energy like using gaz. this will reduce the use of wood energy.
* Ministry in charge of Local Government responsible for mobilization of  
  communities to implement forest program. Local government has the responsibility to explain the role of this policy to the society so that they are aware of the use and importance of the policy.
* Ministry in charge of Industry promotes wood industry, tourism and wildlife  
  conservation. They establish the measures to follow in producing wood, the activity of tourism and wildlife conservation.
* Ministry in charge of Education responsible for research, education and other  
  professional training;
* Ministry in charge of Finance and Economic Planning integrates Natural Resources  
  Management and Environment into sector planning towards effective national  
  program implementation;
* Ministry in charge of Gender plays a leading role in the implementation and  
  mainstreaming of gender into all sectors

National Strategy for Transformation one (NST1) prioritize the promotion of sustainable management of natural resource and environment to transition Rwanda towards a  
Carbon neutral economy. It supports the promotion of wood industry by orienting tree species planted towards commercially viable, and decrease the number of households depending on firewood as source of cooking energy.

Vision 2020 have the following target relating to forestry sector:

* Improved livelihoods of the people through job creation
* Increased value-added of forest products and revenue from forest utilization
* Enhancing the balance of benefit streams towards sustainable yield and  
  ecological conservation

The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II) have the following target:

* Improving the environment management and reducing vulnerability to climate  
  change impact
* Increasing and sustainably managing ecosystems and forest resources to  
  optimize their economic as well as ecological functions.

Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (GGCRS) of 2011 have focused on climate resilient and low carbon economy. It’s principle to forestry is Sustainability of the  
Environment and Natural Resources

* The strategy formulates program of action for sustainable forestry, agroforestry and biomass among others

The NFP is linked to the other policy such as:

* **This policy is together with agriculture policy** to improve agricultural productivity and solve the challenging of soil degradation by promoting agroforestry practices and forest management.
* **The land policy** state that the agroforestry should be part of the agricultural landscape on the hills to contribute to soil protection.
* **Energy policy** is aiming to shift from biomass-based energy to clean energy like electricity and Liquefied Petroleum Gas to reduce the pressure on forest resources.
* **Biodiversity Policy** the national biodiversity policy reflects the rehabilitation of degraded ecosystem.
* **Environment Policy** sayRwanda’s environmental problems are associated with bad management of natural resources such as land, forests and water.
* **Wildlife Policy** contribute to the production of global public goods and services, such as protection of biodiversity, climate stabilization, carbon sequestration and adverse change of ecosystem can have positive or negative to the human survival.

The Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) establish the goal 15 which state the protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable management of forests. And the goal 13 state the Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, stop and reverse land degradation, stop biodiversity losses requires that climate change measures be integrated into national policies and strategies.

**The Paris Agreement** of 12th December 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties signed the agreement to hold the increase in the global warming goal of well below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial averages

**The Bonn Challenge** (2011) is a global aspiration to restore 150 million hectares of the  
world's deforested and degraded lands by 2020. In 2011, Rwanda made its pledge to the  
Bonn Challenge to restore 2 million hectares.

African Union Agenda 2063 (Africa We Want) which is a “global strategy to optimize use of Africa’s resources for the benefits of all Africans”. through Commission des Forêts  
d’Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC) Rwanda signed the agreement to hold the increase in the global warming goal of well below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial averages. EAC Climate Change Policy (EACCP), New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) dealing with among others climate change and natural resources and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) which is a regional platform for multi stakeholder dialogue, information sharing as well as joint planning and management of water and related resources in the Nile Basin.

This policy focus on:

* Institutional Capacity forest institution and actors will be enhanced to match the requirements for sustainable forest management,
* Sustainable Forest Management through the establishment and implementation of  
  integrated forest management plans at all levels.
* Private Sector participation, this sector will be encouraged and supported to increase their investment in forestry sector
* Woody Biomass Energy, this will be developed and implemented to ensure sustainable and efficient biomass supply.
* Forest Ecosystem Conservation: Biodiversity and ecosystems services and values  
  will be enhanced in accordance with national and international agenda.
* Participatory Forest Management, Active participation of stakeholders in Sustainable  
  Forest Management to ensure ownership and proper benefit sharing.
* Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest (TOFo) Development The adoption of Agroforestry and Trees Outside Forest (TOFo) techniques will be enhanced to contribute to overall forest resources and agriculture productivity

**Weakness**

With no doubt this policy is centered on **institutional capacity building** which is the foundation statement that holds up all the other six statements. This makes a necessity of succeeding in this first statement yet, forestry industry players **are rarely in cooperatives**. This makes:

* **A difficult communication**:

Private actors which are considered to be the key driving in this policy are not in cooperatives, you cannot find local companies of varying sizes but only individual private investors. so, it is very difficult to teach sustainable practices and extension services are difficult. Not only that but also dissemination of information on forestry investment opportunities have a low rate of success.

* **Control and Evaluation are complicated**:

The best way to evaluate and control activities in any large mass of people is by GROUPS or COOPERATIVES yet this industry has a failure in this point. so, evaluation of this policy is very difficult hence to determine: the progress, identification of challenges of this policy is very difficult. This elevate the cost of implementation of this policy and decrease the rate of success of this policy.

* **Uncontrolled pricing of forestry-based product**s:

A need for timber and non- timber forest product and services are increasing and there is no determined price of forestry-based product, from this weakness: it is very difficult to attract international and large multinational companies, price fluctuation is at high rate and is very difficult to calculate the cost of production and prediction of the revenues.

* **Weak value chain:**

Forestry industry has many wastes which are raw materials for other industries like mushroom production which is now a very growing industry but the value chain of this industry is very poor. This is a challenge for sustainable forest management. So, this policy should have included the statement to establish a well-organized value chain to achieve sustainability.

**Opportunities**

Good political governance is illustrated by putting institutions with a clear mission to develop the forest sector and create favorable investment facilities.

* This policy is in line with other sector policies that deal with natural resources and environment.
* There are many sector policies, programs and projects deal with environment, biodiversity, food security, energy, watershed management, land management or landscape and forest restoration with forestry as one of the key interventions
* Existence of decentralized civil governance structures
* Existence of the National Forestry Fund (NFF);
* The forest sector plays a big role in job creation.
* Active participation of stakeholders in Sustainable Forest Management to ensure ownership and proper benefit sharing.
* Agroforestry creates jobs to the people like those deals with nursery business. In addition, there is a huge number of NGOs which deals with planting of trees, those provide employment to a lot of people. Example one Acre found etc.
* Fresh environment to animals in general
* Strengthen information sharing mechanisms.
* Forest provide the biomass which is the main Rwandan’s energy source from on farm trees and plantations of fast-growing eucalyptus. (Newtimes, 2018)

**Threats**

* **Overpopulation.**

Natural forests and manmade forests will be affected by overpopulation due to high demand for agricultural land and settlements so that afforestation and reforestation will be limited and some forests can be removed to find the settlement place.

* **Firewood**

Population still rely on traditional charcoals, to adopt the use Development of “green” charcoal and wood pellets to replace traditional charcoal not respected because most of them believe that using charcoals very good to them.

* **Climate change**.

Climate change can affect sustainable forest management because in case of heavy rain leading to erosion so that forest can be removed from the places and even too much sun shine can lead to the wilting of the forests.

* **Accidents.**

Cars transporting the fuels like petrol’s moving in the roads around the forest in case of the accident, they produce fire which can spreads to the forest leading to the burning of whole forest so that the policy to protect forests can be disappointed.

* **Search for grazing land.**

Most of the farmers have the cattle, due to the increase in infrastructures the grazing land become few, in this case the people can burn the forests on their intension to found the land for grazing so that leading to disrespect of the policy taken by the government.

* **Forest pests.**

Forests can be attacked by the pests which can lead to stunting of the forests, wilting or they cannot sprout as usual, this also may lead to the disturbance of the government policy.

* Overharvesting or overexploitation of particular species
* **Pollution** that can harms some natural forest species.
* Introduction non-native species that harm native species.

**Conclusion**

Rwanda national forest is under pressure due to the increase of population growth and subsistence farming. So, the Ministry of Agriculture and the government has introduced the National Forestry policy so that they can restore the destroyed forest and reinstall the forest. To do this, this policy is working with other forest related policy such as land, biodiversity, energy policy etc. This policy is in line with national and international development framework and it addresses all aspects of cross-cutting issues that appear in conventions, treaties and regional/international programmes. This policy has come up with strengths and opportunities and weakness which the government and other international organization has to address safety of the forest environment.

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