Non Timber Forest Products in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic: Which Choices for Livelihoods and Environmental Sustainability?

December, 2008
Non Timber Forest Products in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic: Which choices for Livelihoods and Environmental Sustainability?

Project Completion Report
(CFC /ITTO/68FT PPD19/01 REV 1 (I))

December, 2008
Project Identification

Title: Sustainable Management of Non Timber Forest Products in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic;

Serial Number: CFC /ITTO/68FT PPD19/01 REV 1 (I));

Executing Agency: The World Conservation Union (The International Union for Conservation of Nature). Regional Office for Central Africa (Regional Office for Central and West Africa);

Host Government(s): The Governments of Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic;

Starting Date: July, 2006;

Actual Duration (months): Eight months;

Actual Project Cost (US$): 93634.
# Table of Contents

Project Identification.........................................................................................................................3  
Table of Contents............................................................................................................................... 4  
List of Abbreviations .......................................................................................................................... 5  
1. Justification and context of the project.............................................................................................7  
   1.1. The strategy adopted in carrying out the project...........................................................................8  
   1.2. The project's Activities and Achievements................................................................................10  
      1.2.1. Validation of project findings at the regional level..........................................................11  
      1.2.2. Validation of project ideas at the national level.................................................................12  
      1.2.3. Organization of the NTFP side event during the first international conference of parliamentarians on the sustainable management of Central African forest ecosystems...............12  
   1.3. Project Documentation ..............................................................................................................13  
   1.4. Recommendations ...................................................................................................................15  
PART II: Main Text...........................................................................................................................16  
2. Why the sustainable management of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)?...............................16  
3. Which stakes for NTFPs in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central Africa Republic (CAR)...........18  
   3.1. Categorization of Non Timber Forest Products. .......................................................................20  
   3.2. Constraints and opportunities in the management of different categories of NTFPs..................22  
      3.2.1. Constraints linked to commercialisation.............................................................................24  
      3.2.2. Constraints linked to consumption......................................................................................24  
      3.2.4. Constraints linked to Protected Non Timber Forest Products...........................................27  
      3.2.4. Constraints linked to production........................................................................................28  
PART III: Conclusion and Recommendations ....................................................................................29  
4. Strategy and Action plan for NTFPs in Central Africa....................................................................29  
   4.1. Final recommendations to put in place an action plan.................................................................29  
      4.1.1. Main issues put forward during stakeholders' workshop in Central African Republic........30  
      4.1.2. Main issues put forward during stakeholders workshop in Gabon......................................31  
      4.1.3. Main issues put forward during stakeholders workshop in Congo....................................32  
   4.2. Post-project (Current) opportunities for NTFP development in Central Africa.........................32  
      4.2.1. Project 1: Mobilisation and strengthening capacity of small and medium size enterprises involved in the Non Timber Forest Product sector in Central Africa (GCP/RAF/408/EC)..........................33  
      4.2.2. Project 2: Livelihoods and Landscape Strategy Initiative (LLS)...........................................33  
      4.2.3. Sub regional directive on the sustainable management of NTFPs of plant origin in Central Africa...............................................................................................................36  
References........................................................................................................................................37  
Annex: Outline of sub regional directive on the sustainable management of NTFPs of plant origin in Central Africa........................................................................................................38
List of Abbreviations

AFLEG/FLEGT  Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance/Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
CAR   Central African Republic
CARPE Programme régional pour l’environnement en Afrique Centrale
CBFP Congo Basin Forest Partnership
CBD  Convention on Biological Diversity
CEFDHAC Conférence sur les Ecosystèmes de Forêts Denses et Humides d’Afrique Centrale
CFC Common Fund for Commodities
CITES Convention sur le Commerce International des Espèces de Faune et de Flore Menacées d’Extinction
COMIFAC Commission des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IUCN The International Union for Conservation of Nature
ITTO International Tropical timber Organisation
NGO Non governmental Organisation
NTFPs Non Timber Forest Products
PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UNESCO United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WWF Worldwide Fund for Nature (Fonds Mondial pour la Nature)

List of Boxes
Box 1: Project objectives and expected output...............................................................8
Box 2: Engagements manifested by Stakeholders..........................................................29
Box 3: Main components of project documents in Central Africa Republic......................31
List of Figures
Figure 1: A frame exemplifying the strengths and weaknesses within the NTFP sub sector in Cameroon, Gabon, Congo and CAR.................................................................23
Figure 2: Example of display and packaging patterns for commercial NTFPs..............24
Figure 3: Example of edible NTFPs in the countries studied...........................................25
Figure 4: Example of craftwork from NTFPs....................................................................26
Figure 5: Photos of some protected species. ....................................................................27
Figure 6: Examples of NTFPs trees within agroforestry systems....................................28
Figure 7: Picture on the domestication of Gnetum in Cameroon......................................28

List of Tables
Table 1: Evolution of forests in Congo, Gabon, Cameroon and the Central African Republic ................................................................................................................................16
Table 2: Different categories of NTFPs................................................................................20
Table 3: Categorisation of NTFPs following Commercial value and level of intervention in Central Africa.................................................................21
PART I: Executive Summary

1. Justification and context of the project

The Congo basin forest hosts the most diversified forest understory in Africa. One could count more than 400 species of mammals, 1000 species of birds and approximately more than 10 000 species of plants of which 3000 are endemic (Mallaise, 1997; Bikié et al, 2000 and CBFP, 2005). The flora and fauna (especially those exploited for uses other than timber i.e. Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)) of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon and the Central Africa Republic (CAR) are only partially known to most stakeholders (Maille, 2001; Ngwasiri et al., 2002 and Sunderland and Ndoye, 2004). These products serve as food, source of income and local livelihoods systems thereby helping in the eradication of poverty (Ndoye et al, 1997/1998 and Ngwasiri et al, 2002).

NTFP exploitation goes a long way to favour an equitable and sustainable social development because they are easily accessible and used by all the clusters of the population to realise their individual wellbeing in different ways. However, NTFPs are not well integrated into sectoral development policies in most countries of Central Africa due to their diverse, small and scattered nature and limited information on their resource base. In addition, the data sources on NTFPs are weak, incomplete and inconsistent.

For example, despite the importance of NTFPs in sustaining local livelihoods, some studies suggest that people's exploitation of these products is an important source of forest degradation and deforestation, thus complicating strategies to manage forest ecosystems sustainably in Central Africa. However this assertion is difficult to be confirmed due to lack of tangible data. Subsequently, the support structures and actors involved in their management are not well developed both at the organizational and institutional settings at the national and trans-boundary levels. Therefore, efforts to foster sustainable forest management and poverty reduction are limited. Thus by verifying the level of information regarding NTFPs, forest management activities could be improved...
to make the contribution of the forestry sector to the economies of Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic more durable.

Box 1: Project objectives and expected output

The Specific Objective(s) and Output of the project

The global objective of the project was to improve knowledge on the production of NTFPs with a view to maximize the contribution of the forestry sector to the economies of Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic.

The expected outputs from this study included:

A strategy and an action plan was developed

- The information available on NTFP in some countries within the sub-region (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, and Central African Republic) was put together through document search and contact with some experts;
- Studies on the management of NTFPs and hunting products in the four countries covered by the project (Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, and Central African Republic) were evaluated;
- Socio-economic impact of NTFPs were analysed;
- The participation of different stakeholders (NGO, civil society representatives) in NTFP management was brought out;
- The flow in the commerce of NTFP was identified.

Formulation of final recommendations to put in place an action plan.

- The conclusions of the study were compiled and the results disseminated.
- A validation workshop of a strategy and action plan for the project was organized.
- Final recommendations to put in place an action plan were brought out.

1.1. The strategy adopted in carrying out the project

This was a fast tract project aimed at developing a strategy and an action plan for the sustainable management of NTFPs in Central Africa. It was executed using four consultants based in the respective countries of
intervention under the supervision of the forest and conservation program of IUCN. As a pre-project, it benefited from qualitative research method using mainly desk review, participant observation, meetings, focus groups and exploratory field visits in data collection, compilation and report write up. The methodological approach adopted in each case depended on the outcomes envisaged at the end the process.

Synthesized data led to the formulation of final recommendations for the development of an action and the preparation of project documents to foster the NTFPs sector in the respective countries. Since ITTO was prospected as the main donor to fund the projects, the writing format was used. This was however a handicap because if they fail to provide the funds, it will mean redoing the project all over again which is painstaking.

The project implementation was done in three stages. The first phase of the project activities involved the compilation of NTFP related literature, events and key issues into a report. The reports followed a proposed structure prepared and adopted by the group of consultants in accordance with IUCN staff. A main aspect on this phase was to produce national reports summarising main stakes on NTFPs in the countries concerned. In this report, the general background on NTFPs in the countries was to be emphasized; the main constraints and opportunities of this sector brought out and three key project ideas brought forth. The national reports were then summarised into a regional report which emphasized the cross-cutting problems presented in the national report and potential axis for the development of NTFPs in the countries studied.

Next, was the organization of the regional workshop (held in Douala, Cameroon in October, 2006) to present and validate the project reports and discuss future perspectives. This workshop ended with the amendment and adoption of the national and regional reports, from where the development of a strategy and action plan was elaborated.

Following the Douala recommendations and as prescribed on the project document, a second phase of activities started which involved the organization of
national workshops in Gabon, Congo and CAR. These workshops were aimed at adopting the national reports with local stakeholders and authorities; give orientation on the development of national NTFP project documents and confirm the national consultants to be responsible for developing the project documents to be submitted to ITTO. This phase which started in November was jointly facilitated by IUCN and FAO. Cameroon was left out because there were a number of ongoing efforts on NTFPs.

The activities of this project were executed in close collaboration with other institutions working on NTFPs within the countries involved (national ministries in charge of forestry, national ministries in charge of agriculture and other local, national and regional organizations). At the sub-regional level, the CIFOR, ICRAF, SNV and FAO regional offices were highly implicated with the consent of COMIFAC. This collaboration was mainly to put together NTFP related data and formulate a strategy for the action plan.

During the last phase which was the design of the project documents for funding, apart of the contribution of all the organizations mentioned, a core was created between the consultant; the ITTO focal point; the COMIFAC focal point and a representative from the national ministry in charge of forestry in the respective countries. This group worked on the follow-up and validation of the project document with technical support from IUCN and FAO in alignment with the COMIFAC convergence plan and the priorities of the national government.

1.2. The project’s Activities and Achievements

The activities of this pre-project timely contributed to the gathering of strategic information and raising of awareness on NTFP related issues at the national and regional level. It was timely first because it was implemented at a time when most national governments were about revising their PRSP processes and thus reminded forestry authorities to consider NTFPs in this process more seriously.
Secondly, it was executed at a time when countries like CAR were revising their national forestry law and thus provided some information to be considered in this procedure. Finally, the difficulties encountered in including NTFPs in national processes as the PRSP were directly translated into the problem statement being addressed in the project document. This was one of the outcomes from the national workshop in Bangui. Finally, it stimulated debates during the first international conference of parliamentarians on the sustainable management of Central African forest ecosystems.

1.2.1. Validation of project findings at the regional level

The sub regional workshop on the sustainable management of Non Timber Forest Products in Central Africa was held at Hotel Arcade of Douala, Republic of Cameroon, on the 5th and the 6th of October 2006. The overall objective of the workshop was to validate project results, create awareness and contribute toward the sustainable management of Non Timber Forest Products through the development of a sub regional and national action plan and strategy.

During this workshop, all the project reports were successfully presented and validated. The project ideas were modified and it was recommended that national workshops be organised in Gabon, Congo Brazzaville and the Central African Republic in order to facilitate the appropriation of results of the study at national and sub regional level; finalize logical frameworks per strategic guidelines and pursue in a concerted manner the finalization of the project formulation processes to be submitted to ITTO and other donors.

At the end this workshop, a final communiqué was prepared and adopted by all participants. This was multiplied and disseminated to the national governments and other stakeholders. It was also intended to guide the running and conduct of the national workshops that were organised in the three countries were national workshops were organised.
1.2.2. Validation of project ideas at the national level

Between November, 2006 and January, 2007; workshops were organized in Gabon (22nd November, 2006), Central African Republic (30th November, 2007) and Congo (17th January, 2007). This was aimed at sharing project ideas at the national level; lobbying for a political buy in of project ideas and preparing the groundwork for the design of project documents to be submitted for funding. These workshops all took place at the conference halls of the ministry in charge of forestry in all countries and were officially opened and chaired by senior authorities of these ministries in each case, and in the presence of the national ITTO and COMIFAC focal points.

The specific objectives of the workshops were to:

- Analyze the needs and/or constraints observed within the NTFP sector in the country concerned;
- Define the main constraints that the project will eradicate upon approval;
- Define the main objectives of the project document;
- Establish an agenda for the elaboration and finalization of the project document to be submitted for funding.

During this workshop, apart of the fact that the national actors were informed on the regional efforts in the NTFPs sector, they were given the opportunity to jointly agree on the main objectives and expected outcomes of the project documents that was to help in the development of this sector.

1.2.3. Organization of the NTFP side event during the first international conference of parliamentarians on the sustainable management of Central African forest ecosystems

During the first international conference of parliamentarians, a side event was organised championed by IUCN. The main objective of the side event on NTFPs was to find out how Parliamentarians could be effectively involved in the process of sustainable management and valorisation of NTFPs. During the discussions which were mainly focused towards parliamentarians, it was
suggested the ICRAF’s experience be multiplied and spread out to as many countries and possible. Next was the fact that the local population be sensitized on the legal and policy framework in order to develop this sector. Finally was a suggestion that NTFPs be made more valuable in the lives of local people by searching for new markets; developing new processing technologies and building the capacities of indigenous people. Presentations that led the discussions during this side event as follows:

1. “Agir pour une contribution soutenue des PFNL à l’atteinte des objectifs du millénaire. La place du Parlementaire dans ce chantier? (Presentation done by Abdon AWONO, CIFOR);

2. Domesticating indigenous fruit trees as a contribution to poverty reduction and SMF ecosystem of Central Africa (Presentation done by Dr. Zac TCHOUSNIU, ICRAF);

3. Legal and institutional framework impacting on NTFPs in Central Africa. Policy priorities to promote the sustainable management and use of NTFPs (Presentation done by Sven WALTER, FAO);

4. Valorisation and sustainable management of NTFPs and the fight against poverty in the Republic of Congo (Presentation done by Joël LOUMETO, Republic of Congo);

5. Constraints, opportunities and perspectives on the sustainable management of NTFPs in Gabon (Presentation done by NGUIMBIS Leon, Gabon);


1.3. Project Documentation

The following reports were produced from the project:

6. Project Proposal: Development of the NTFP sector in Congo. 35p;
7. Project Proposal: Development of the NTFP sector in Gabon. 25p;
8. Project Proposal: Development of the NTFP sector in CAR. 35p;
9. Report on the national workshop on the validation of project ideas for the development of the NTFPs sector in Gabon;
10. Report on the national workshop on the validation of project ideas for the development of the NTFPs sector in CAR;
11. Report on the national workshop on the validation of project ideas for the development of the NTFPs sector in Congo;
12. Report on the sub regional workshop for the Validation of project ideas on the sustainable management of NTFPs in Cameroun, Congo, Gabon, and CAR. 36p.
1.4. Recommendations

Even if the respective national governments were implicated in the process of project implementation and formulation of project ideas, participation and ownership remained obscure. Although effectively ensuring strong participation of the national governments is complicated, they should always be given special consideration in all stages of project formulation and implementation to improve on ownership and participation. Other on-the-field strategies should be identified and promoted to enhance this participation and ownership.

It will be necessary to encourage, stimulate and multiply NTFPs related debates at local, national and regional spaces in order to ensure the development of these products nationally and regionally. Therefore, special processes and mechanisms should be encouraged to spark up and maintain such debates. Additionally, the partners’ engagements during the regional workshop could be an important milestone in this process. However, it will be necessary to identify funding mechanisms and activities to push forward these engagements.

Finally, it is absolutely necessary for additional resources to be provided in order to follow-up the writing and sourcing for funding for the projects designed by the three countries. This will give more strength to this project and make more valuable its outcomes.
PART II: Main Text

2. Why the sustainable management of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)?

FAO (2005) in analysing the annual variation of forest cover in Central Africa (see table 1) suggested that comprehensive efforts to combat biodiversity lost needs to consider the impact of NTFP exploitation on the environment. In their analysis, they illustrated that although most countries had significant forest cover going up to 84.4% of total land cover in Gabon, the average annual variation remained negative in this country and for Africa as a whole. This indicates that forest degradation is a reality and hence there is a need to look into forest management activities with more scrutiny. This requires a high-quality understanding of the forest ecosystems of these various countries and the different resources they harbour.

Table 1: Evolution of forests in Congo, Gabon, Cameroon and the Central African Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total forest cover (millions of ha)</th>
<th>Forest Plantations (millions of ha)</th>
<th>Total forest cover (millions of ha)</th>
<th>Percentage of surface area covered by forest (%)</th>
<th>Annual Variation (millions of ha)</th>
<th>Annual variation rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>23858</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>23938</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>-222</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>22907</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22911</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>-30</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>22060</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22143</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>-17</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>21826</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21862</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>649866</td>
<td>8036</td>
<td>657902</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>-5262</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A systematic analysis of the situation of forest cover and available resources shows that the Cameroonian forest has a surface area of 23,858 millions hectare of which 80 millions hectares are from agroforestry systems and forest plantation (FAO, 2005). This forest inhabits between 8 000 and 12 000 species of wild flora and fauna with close to 300 species of mammifers and 850 species of birds (Bikie et al, 1998; Brown, 2005). To be more precise, Tchatat et al (2002) in an inventory of plant and animal species in the Southern part of Cameroon revealed close to 500 different plants and 280 animal species with more than 1 200 different uses. Following statistics from the interministerial Commission on NTFPs in Cameroon, the Cameroonian forest, produces more than 1 044,782 tones (leaves, barks, grains, etc.) of NTFP per year.

As to what concerns the Gabonese forest, it extends on a total surface area of 21,1 million hectare covering close to 85% of the surface area of the country. The domain of permanent forest is estimated at 13,3 millions hectares approximately, comprising 10,6 millions hectares of natural forest under production, 2,70 millions hectares of protected forests and 25.000 hectares of plantations (OIBT, 2006). Leaving out the dense forest, the rest of the country is comprised of a mosaic of forest and savanna, marshy formation and mangroves. Talking about biodiversity, Gabon is a country having two large biomes: one aquatic (marine, submerged, dulcicole) and a terrestrial biome (forest, savanna and marshes). The terrestrial, biome inhabits approximately 8.000 plant species, 150 mammifers and more than 600 species of birds and many reptiles.

Contrarily, the Congolese forest has a total surface area of 22,471,271 hectare, covering 65% of the national territory. Out of natural forest cover, the total area covered by forest has witnessed a growth, amounting to 73,500 hectare, obtained from the Limba plantations (*Terminalia superbo*) and *Eucalyptus* spp. Whereas the Congolese flora species are more studied, their fauna species are less known. The principal inventories which could be exploited are those from protected areas and forest reserves. The works carried out on
fauna species so far lay more emphasis on primates and big mammals. The results of inventories by (Aubé, 1996) estimates 200 species of mammifers, 500 species of birds, 5 species of reptiles and ± 700 species of fish found in continental waters.

The diversity of NTFPs in Central African Republic accrues mostly from the rich forest ecosystems it occupies and the importance attached to these products. Their roles in the household economies and at the national levels can not be over emphasized. Certain NTFPs are consumed exclusively within the country and are not exported to the outside world. Contrarily, others are exported and highly demanded.

From this analysis of the forestry situation in these countries, it could be noticed that forest as important sources of livelihoods are threatened. To respond to this, the governments are making efforts to create agroforestry systems and other artificial forest. However, how these forests respond to the daily needs of the local population is not certain. In addition, it is not definite how much NTFPs harvesting could contribute to the rate of annual variation of forests. Finally, how knowledgeable local people are the deforestation and domestication processes is doubtful. Therefore the central concern of this study was to analyse the potentials and socio-economic advantages of NTFP in order to enhance their contribution in sustainable forest management in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central Africa Republic.

3. Which stakes for NTFPs in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central Africa Republic (CAR)

Following the engagements of countries to respect the deliberations of the United Nation's 1992 Conference on Environment and Development in Rio De Janerio, the judicial texts binding forest laws and those of Forest Products witnessed an evolution in the Central African sub region. The sustainable management of natural resources observed substantial reforms especially in the drawing up of the forestry laws and codes. These laws and codes considered NTFPs differently with more emphasis on products from animal sources than plant origin in the four countries were different in their presentation and application but similar in their context.
those from plant sources. In all the four countries, the legal and policy framework pertaining to Non Timber Forest Products from plant and animal origin were different in their presentation and application, but similar in their contexts. However, the 21st century has observed a lot of changes in the management of NTFPs with most countries modifying their forestry texts to take into consideration NTFPs. The governments had equally taken engagements at the sub-regional and international levels by ratifying to many conventions. Gabon for example, ratified to the convention on the International Accord on Tropical wood (AIBT) in 1994; the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Flora and Fauna Species (CITES); the Commission of Forests in Central Africa (COMIFAC) and the AFLEGT/FLEGT processes. Cameroon on the other hand, has ratified to many conventions both at the international and regional levels. It is the case for example with CITES; CBD; COMIFAC, and UNESCO Conventions for example.

There are many national processes of protecting endangered species and sensitizing the local people on the importance of the protection of these species like producing chats. Generally, the exploitation and the diverse uses of NTFPs is included in the international, regional and national policies processes which are transmitted through the adoption of strategies aimed at:

- Ensuring food security;
- Ameliorating revenue sources;
- Improving the protection of biodiversity through the conservation of forests that produce NTFPs;
- Contributing to poverty reduction and enhancing sustainable development.

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have done some work to develop the policy and statutory framework on NTFPs in Central Africa with two projects. First is the Institutional Support Project on the sustainable management of Non Timber Forest Products - TCP/CMR/2905 and the the project on enhancing food security through Non-Wood Forest Products in Central Africa (GCP/RAF/398/GER). In this process they worked in
collaboration with GTZ and enacted a regional directive for the management of NTFPs for the Central Africa Sub-region (see post project activities below).

However, this directive does not respond to all the constraints facing the NTFP sub sector. Therefore after portray the different categories of NTFPs, the constraints are presented together with the action plan adopted in the course of the project.

3.1. Categorization of Non Timber Forest Products.

Summarising from FAO, (2000); Walter, (2001); Tchatat et al, (2002) and Sunderland et al., (2004): NTFPS could be classified depending on their origin - if they are from animal or plant sources as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Different categories of NTFPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plants and plant products</th>
<th>Animals and animal products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Foods and drinks obtained from fruits, nuts, grains, roots, edible fungi etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fodder/feed</td>
<td>Feed for animals or bees, obtained from leaves, plants etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Medicinal plants, leaves, backs, roots, which are used in traditional healings and/or by pharmaceutical factories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfume and cosmetic products</td>
<td>Aromatic plants (herbs) producing useful oils (volatile) and other products used in cosmetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorants and tannins</td>
<td>Vegetal materials mostly backs, leaves, that give tanning and other parts of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at the diversity and uses of NTFPs, a classification could be done following the level of intervention, the commercial value and the parts used. The most remarkable groups following this categorisation could be constituted around food products, fodder, and medicinal products, other magic and artisanal products (See table three).

Table 3: Categorisation of NTFPs following Commercial value and level of intervention in Central Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Categories</th>
<th>Parts used for plant products</th>
<th>Parts used from animal products</th>
<th>Commercial value</th>
<th>Level of intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fodder/feed</td>
<td>Leaves and soft stems</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>Mostly local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicinal uses</td>
<td>Leaves, roots and backs, sap and nectar</td>
<td>Bones, blood, heart and fur</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Local, national and international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisanal products</td>
<td>Wood, ropes and cane</td>
<td>Bone and skin</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Local, national and international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food products</td>
<td>All parts except wood</td>
<td>All parts except excreta and fur</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic, supernatural and Mystical uses</td>
<td>Mostly leaves, trunks, nuts and barks</td>
<td>Whole animals, heart, kidneys, bile and trotters</td>
<td>Undefined</td>
<td>Mostly local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Tree canopy and parks</td>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>Mostly local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Source: Conceived by Ngome-Tata (2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decorative uses</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Bone, tusk, teeth, fur and skin</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Mostly local with little national and international concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic fuel</td>
<td>Wood, leaves, branches and roots</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the definition of NTFPs by the four countries may sound different due to appellation, all the products are similar in categorization. However, this categorisation is not standardized to ease communication, development and valorisation even though traditional users and actors maybe verse with the products.

3.2. Constraints and opportunities in the management of different categories of NTFPs

The management of NTFPs involves many stakeholders with different power positions bringing many controversies and conflicts in implementation procedures. Although the State is suppose to be paramount in directing actions, due to the small and scattered nature of the products involving many uses and user's groups, individual and community identity often dominate. This results to diverse contingencies to be addressed during development intervention.

Summarily, NTFPs face similar opportunities and constraints as brought out on Figure 1, which illustrates that the most outstanding potentials of NTFPs are often undermined by complex problems at the grass root and national level. Therefore for the NTFP sector to be considered a pro-poor engine in development planning in forest adjacent areas of Central Africa, the threats and weaknesses remain a real hindrance. However, there exist windows of hope with the ongoing processes in developing this
sector and other processes being conceived. These hindrances were also discussed by authors like Iqbal (1995) and Sunderland and Ndoye (2004).

**Strengths**

Many products, uses and users groups that give an excellent potential for a wide market beyond the sub region

As sources of rural livelihoods, many donors are interested to invest in innovative approaches to develop these products.

Many of the products have been demonstrated to have high commercial values that could help people come out of poverty.

Many of the products have high nutritional values compared to some agricultural products.

They are the surest sources of bio-products and thus can attract many naturalists and nutritional experts.

**Weaknesses**

Too many small and scattered products, users groups and uses difficult to assemble, develop and coordinate.

Too many uncoordinated actors and actions difficult to track and reconcile make implementation complex.

The best prices are often out of the production area where the poorest of the poor are based. Since gathering and preliminary processing is time and energy consuming, the poor are unable to pay for their time and energy fairly.

The nutritional potentials of these products are not well known and valorised to attract new comers.

**Opportunities**

NTFPs are accessible to the poorest of the poor for diverse uses as medicine, food and income. This thus helps in poverty reduction and enhances social equity.

There exist local processing and conservation methods that could be developed.

Wide range of traditional knowledge on most of the products.

Much research and ongoing processes on knowing and better understanding NTFPs in Central Africa is underway.

Domestication strategies and agroforestry systems already exist for some of the products which could help in meeting increase demand.

**Threats**

NTFPs are easy to be captured by the rich (and elites) in case income potentials are improved.

Processing and conservation techniques have no control and scrutiny thus not convincing and attractive to many people out of the production area. Developing processing techniques needs substantial resources and capacity building.

Traditional methods and knowledge not well documented thus it is always changing and is exposed to abandonment.

The extent to which the forest dependent population rely on NTFPs has not been determined yet.

Domestication could be a potential threat to the availability of bio-products if not properly handled.

Source: Conceived by Ngome-Tata (2008).

**Figure 1:** A frame exemplifying the strengths and weaknesses within the NTFP sub sector in Cameroon, Gabon, Congo and CAR.

Following product categories, pictures presentation have been used to explain other specific constraints in the sections below.
3.2.1. Constraints linked to commercialisation

Non Timber Forest Product destined for commercial purposes with a high value adding potentials: Arabic gum, Rauvolfia vomitoria, Xylopia aethiopica, Honey and bee wax, Pipper guineense, medicinal products

![Figure 1: Processed medicinal NTFPs on local markets in Gabon (photo by Guimbi L. (2006)).](image1)

![Colanuts displaced for sale in CAR (photo by Maidou H. (2006)).](image2)

![Bottled honey in Congo (photo by Kimpouni V., 2006).](image3)

![Bottled honey in Cameroon (photo by Nome P., 2006).](image4)

![Parcelled nuts and fruits in Cameroon (photo by Ngome P., 2006).](image5)

Figure 2: Example of display and packaging patterns for commercial NTFPs

The main difficulty observed here is the inconsistency in parcelling, measurement and display patterns. Therefore, there is a need to standardize most processes involved in the trade of NTFPs in Central Africa to attract other actors and outsiders.

3.2.2. Constraints linked to consumption

Commonly consumed Non Timber Forest Products with high commercial value
include Gnetum spp, Carterpillars, mushrooms, Marantaceae leaves, Palm oil, bush meat, cooking fuel (charcoal, fuelwood)

Figure 3: Example of edible NTFPs in the countries studied.

Here it is noticed that most of the products are consumed fresh or dried. For some of the fresh products, conservation is a real problem. For the dry ones, most often the products start decaying before they really get dry since drying is done under the sun (NGOYE et al., 1996). The high commercial value at the local level demonstrates
that people are relying on NTFPs for income and employment. In any case, the extent to which NTFPs are really permitting people to meet their daily needs and come out of poverty locally and nationally cannot be pronounced with certainty. As such their implication in policy processes remain misty (IUCN, 2008). However, they have been demonstrated to contribute to the GDP of some countries like Cameroon (Ndoye et al, 1997/1998).

Looking at the case of domestic fuel, although fuelwood and charcoal represent the principal sources of cooking fuel, they are often left out in NTFPs related debates. Additional the percentage of household expenditure regarding cooking fuel has often been neglected in socio-economic research in the forest areas of the countries involved.

3.2.3. Constraints linked to Craft and artisanal products

Non Timber Forest Products Destined for local artisanal or craft work:
Rotins (*Laccosperma secundiflorum*, et *Eremospatha macrocaropa*), Marantaces leaves, bamboo

![Craft work in Gabon (Photo by Guimb L., 2006)](image1)

![Pigmies huts in Cameroon (Photo by Ngome P., 2006)](image2)

Figure 4: Example of craftwork from NTFPs

For the artisanal sector, finishing and quality value adding hinders the promotion and valorisation of furniture beyond the national boundaries. Also lack of technical skills, better equipments and market information discourage the craftsmen to invest durably in the activity. As such, innovative approaches to craftsmanship are limited and value adding is low.
In the case of building and construction materials using NTFPs as leaves, the process is still traditional meaning that the huts (as those of the pigmies presented in figure 4) constructed are non durable. Even though these huts may provide potentials for the development of ecotourism, they are also a threat to conservation as these structures need to be permanently renewed meaning destroying the natural environment constantly. Besides, the population inhabiting such huts are naturally pruned to having poor housing conditions which affects directly their livelihoods and wellbeing.

### 3.2.4. Constraints linked to Protected Non Timber Forest Products

**Figure 5: Photos of some protected species.**

IUCN and other conservation organisations together with national governments have done a lot of work to sensitize the rural population and local actors on the dangers of anarchy exploitation of wildlife and other endangered species of plants and animals origin. This has been through the IUCN red list which is published everywhere. Also, by the implementing many bush meat programs and programs related to endangered species, the population and national governments are informed to work in collaboration with conservation organisations to promote resource conservation.
3.2.4. Constraints linked to production

Main production hotspots of NTFPs were natural forest, agroforestry systems and plantations (domestication). Whereas the natural forest dominated for almost all products, there were some agroforestry systems for some few products like * Irvingia * spp. The agroforestry systems depended on the ability of farmers to maintain the young or adult trees on their farms or around their homesteads (see figure 6). More investigation needs to be done to know the type and origin of NTFPs related agroforestry systems that exist in the area and how peasants manage to maintain their production.

**Picture of Atangatier and bush mango managed around homesteads**

*(Photo by Guimbi L., 2006)*

**Figure 6: Examples of NTFPs trees within agroforestry systems**

**Gnetum domestication (Photo by Nome P., 2006)**

**Figure 7: Picture on the domestication of Gnetum in Cameroon**
Domestication strategies were many and specific to each species of NTFPs. For example, whereas some positive results have been achieved on the domestication of products like *irvingia spp*, the domestication of others like *gnetum spp* has remained very challenging (see Figure 7). Although much research and continuous efforts is being employed in the domestication of NTFPs, more resources, expertise and funding need to be provided to make the realisations practical and easily applicable by local farmers in their natural milieu.

**PART III: Conclusion and Recommendations**

4. **Strategy and Action plan for NTFPS in Central Africa**

After the various presentations of the workshop documents, the various project ideas from the country reports were examined and modified accordingly. From these discussions, final recommendations to develop an action were made and main domains of intervention to guide implementation in the various countries were agreed upon.

4.1. **Final recommendations to put in place an action plan**

In accord with the project documents, actors pronounced engagements within their respective areas of interest to work towards an action plan as follows:

**Box 2: Engagements manifested by Stakeholders**

- **COMIFAC**: Ensure that all member countries of the ITTO in the COMIFAC countries are involved;
- **IUCN**: Support the formulation of a sub regional strategy on sustainable management of NTFPs, especially on policy, institutional and partnership aspects;
- **ICRAF**: Promote aspects related to domestication, marketing and resource inventory;
- **WWF**: Facilitate aspects related to multiple resource management in areas under management;
- **CIFOR**: Contribute toward a mastery of socio-economic aspects and those related to knowledge of resources;
- **FAO**: Strengthen institutional capacity building in the sub region.
Furthermore, during this regional workshop, **some strategic axes** were adopted for the development of the NTFPs sector in the Central Africa as follows:

- Techniques of extraction, transformation and commercialisation;
- Capacity building;
- Inventory of resources and their domestication.

**Four main sub strategic axes** were identified as:

- Vision/strategy;
- Legal and institutional development;
- Development of information and statistics on NTFPs;
- Partnership.

Following these strategic axis, **five main intervention domains** were identified as follows for the sub region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Domain 1: Domestication;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Domain 2: Marketing - Extraction, transformation and commercialisation of NTFPs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Domain 3: Knowledge of resources;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Domain 4: Integration of NTFPs in forest management practices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Domain 5: Elaboration of a strategy for the management of NTFPs in the Congo Basin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since countries had the mandate to set their own priorities for the development of the NTFP sector nationally, these axis were left open for modification. However, they were presented during the national workshops to spark up discussions on national strategies to develop the NTFP sector. In addition these were presented to make sure that the national governments have similar lines of thinking so that NTFP sector could be developed similarly within the sub region.

**4.1.1. Main issues put forward during stakeholders’ workshop in Central African Republic**

During the stakeholders’ workshop in Bangui - CAR, the importance of marketing was emphasised. In any case, it was noted that for marketing to be successful, there was need for a number of factors to be put together including capacity building:
technology improvement; proper understanding of the production potentials of NTFPs and main production sites. These will lead to the design of better strategies to improve policy that will promote management, production and commercialisation. Therefore the suggested project for the development of the NTFP sector in Central Africa Republic was made up of four main components as follows:

**Box 3: Main components of project documents in Central Africa Republic**

**Component 1:** Capacity building and empowerment of the staff of local and national governments; and that of local development partners in order to successfully integrate NTFPs into national and local development policies and processes. The main objective of this component is to provide all actors with a more or less equal level of understanding on NTFPs related issues.

**Component 2:** Cartography and estimation of the potentials of NTFPs in order to establish harvesting calendars and re-orientate policy to favour sustainable production of NTFPs. The objective here is to improve understanding on the potentials of NTFPs and also study the exploitation and management mode as well as their impact on the resource base. Main results were to estimate the production of NTFPs nationally and know their spatial repartition, with the aim to improve policy.

**Component 3:** Maintain and increase the production of NTFPs threatened species through domestication activities. This will help in the supply of valuable products, promote resource conservation and maintain sources of livelihoods and local income.

**Component 4:** With the aim to increase the income of NTFP dependent population, there will be a component on the development of NTFPs marketing channel for a better valorisation of the products.

**4.1.2. Main issues put forward during stakeholders workshop in Gabon**

During the workshop in Gabon, the stakeholders concluded on two main project components to guide the development of the NTFP sector as follows:

The first priority brought out is the need to produce reliable and permanent statistical data base on NTFPs in Gabon to ensure proper follow up; durability in policy formulation and market supply. The objective here is to enhance understanding on key NTFPs as well as promote durable conduct for their management and use.
The second priority is to design more sustainable ways of processing and storage of these products by revisiting old technological packages and reinventing more practicable and acceptable ones. This will lead to value adding within the sector and improve on income sources from NTFPs.

4.1.3. Main issues put forward during stakeholders workshop in Congo

In the case of Congo, four main components were brought out during the stakeholders' workshop. First was a component to improve on the general knowledge of NTFPs in order to be able to ameliorate stakeholders' participation in debates and processes on NTFPs development. This will help to restructure the data base on NTFPs and improve the system of statistical data collection, treatment and diffusion.

Then was the need to elaborate and adopt durable norms on the extraction and commercialisation of NTFPs in order to improve on quality and guarantee sustainability in its trade. This will also help to reduce anarchy harvesting and post harvest losses by organizing the marketing filiere of most products.

Thirdly was a component to promote the conservation of major NTFPs through domestication activities with the view of promoting conservation of endangered species and maintenance of product supply on local markets.

Finally was to evaluate the economic importance of NTFPs with the objective to identify the actors and the income from the NTFPs filiere, the number of jobs created and the direct and indirect revenue sources from NTFPs. This will enable actors to appreciate exactly to what extend NTFPs are able to contribute to the GDP of Congo for better economic integration and policy follow-up of the products nationally.

4.2. Post-project (Current) opportunities for NTFP development in Central Africa

After the completion of the this project, whiled awaiting funding for some of the project documents submitted, other ongoing initiatives on NTFPs within the sub region are presented in the section that follow.
4.2.1. Project 1: Mobilisation and strengthening capacity of small and medium size enterprises involved in the Non Timber Forest Product sector in Central Africa (GCP/RAF/408/EC)

The key objective of this three-year project initiated in 2007 is to increase the revenue of rural families through entrepreneurial skill development; capacity building and sustainable management of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs).

Expected results

- Capacity of small and medium size enterprises involved in forest production reinforced;
- Priority NTFPs sub sectors developed;
- Sustainable management of priority NTFPs reinforced notably from harvesting to domestication, institutional;
- Legal framework adapted to the functioning of NTFPs stakeholders in Central Africa.

The project is implemented primarily in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Smaller sites exist in Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central Africa Republic and Chad.

Project partners: Food and Agriculture Organization FAO, ICRAF, SNV and CIFOR.

4.2.2. Project 2: Livelihoods and Landscape Strategy Initiative (LLS)

Livelihoods and landscape is an approach to poverty reduction that seeks to enable the rural poor to expand their economic opportunities while sustaining and enhancing forest and other biological resources. By working together, a shared understanding of the value of forest for improving local livelihoods can be built, with a view to influencing policies that can reduce poverty and conserve forest.

The main objective of the LLS initiative is “the effective implementation of national and local policies and programmes that leverage real and meaningful change in the lives of rural poor, enhance long-term and equitable conservation of biodiversity and ensure the sustainable supply of forest-related goods and services in line with nationally-defined priorities.”
The intervention goal in the Congo basin is to recognise and support the rights and capacities of marginalised local communities to own and manage forest resources as a means of enhancing their livelihood security, and afford greater institutional and legal protection to biodiversity rich areas.

After a series of consultative workshops with field partners, ICRAF, CIFOR, CEES, CERAD, WWF jengi and CEW were conscripted as executing partners. Together with these partners, the national parks of Lobeke in Cameroon, Dzanga-Ndoki in Central Africa Republic and Nouabe Ndoki in the Republic of Congo as well as their peripheries within the Sangha Trinational Park (TNS) have been identified as major execution sites.

Generally eight strategic outcomes have been suggested for the LLS initiative worldwide as follows:

On Poverty: Strategic Outcomes 1 and 2

Strategic Outcome 1: Extreme poverty reduced by 25% in three rural areas where the strategy has programmatic activities.

Strategic Outcome 2: Household incomes, including those of the poorer social clusters, increased by 50% in one-third of the areas where the Strategy has programmatic activities.

On Markets and incentives: Strategic Outcomes 3 and 4

Strategic Outcome 3: Arrangements that facilitate sustainable local trade in forest products for the poor available in at least three countries where the Strategy is active.

Strategic Outcome 4: At least one set of best practice guidelines for the investment in, and management of a forest-related commodity adopted by a major multinational corporation or other investor and promoted as a recognised industry standard or investment criteria.

On Governance - FLEG

Strategic Outcome 5: The area of land under some form of secure tenure (e.g. owned, leased, long-term management agreement) for local populations over forest-
related resources increased by 25% in at least five of the rural areas where the Strategy has programmatic activities.

On Governance: Rights and Tenure

Strategic Outcome 6: National and sub-national tripartite activities on law enforcement and governance demonstrably reduce by one-third the estimated rates of illegal logging in at least three rural areas where the Strategy has programmatic activities."

On Transforming Landscapes: Forest Landscape Restoration

Strategic Outcome 7: A 10% net area increase in forest-related, locally-negotiated multifunctional land-uses in at least 5 rural areas where the Strategy has programmatic activities.

Strategic Outcome 8: Decision-makers from government (both land-use and non-traditional ministries), civil society and the private sector demonstrate commitment to adopt the concepts, recommendations, tools and approaches generated by the Strategy's activities in at least 3 countries.

In addition some indicative sub-outcomes and intended impacts have been designed for the Congo Basin as follows:

First, based on appropriate and locally derived indicators, extreme poverty reduced by 25% in at least two communities (at least one of which would be a Ba'ka community) living within the tri-national landscape. Livelihoods of the Bantu and Ba'ka populations will be assessed independently (contributing to LLS outcome 1).

Secondly, national/local government and private companies initiate procedures to adopt equitable and sustainable guidelines for regulating bush meat trade, based on reliable statistics (contributing to LLS outcome 3).

Thirdly, at least one additional concessionaire adopts independently verifiable procedures to advance sustainable forest management and, eventually, to achieve third party certification (contributing to LLS outcome 4).
Fourthly, approaches and data on policies, regulations and investments that yield conservation and development benefits applied to other similar situations in the Congo Basin (contributing to LLS outcome 4).

In the fifth place, the rights of Ba'ka communities in at least one of the three countries are more clearly recognised by local/national authorities, and translated into tangible benefits with respect to forest resource protection and management activities (contributing to LLS outcome 5).

And then, is the reduction of illegal harvesting by 30 per cent in at least one programme area adjacent to the tri-national park, with data documented to provide a working example for the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (contributing to LLS outcome 6).

Next, strengthen organisational/management capacity at the level of specific communities, as well as better external institutional mechanisms that recognise and allow communities to sustainably manage forest-related resources (contributing to LLS outcome 7).

Finally, responsible authorities commit to review options to formally recognise and protect the rights of Ba'ka people in existing forest resource management policies and regulations in at least one country (contributing to LLS outcome 8).

4.2.3. Sub regional directive on the sustainable management of NTFPs of plant origin in Central Africa

The sub regional directive on the sustainable management of NTFPs of plant origin in Central Africa was elaborated and adopted in 2008 by FAO, COMIFAC and GTZ. This process was facilitated by the technical and financial support of the FAO project GCP/RAF/398/GER on NTFPs and the German Federal Government of Food, Agriculture and the Protection of Consumers respectively.

The elaboration of this directive on NTFPs was guided by a combination of diverse factors affecting local communities in Central Africa as high poverty rates; increase demographic pressure; difficult access to income generating activities; growing high national, regional and international demand for NTFPs and; the need for better forest management to ensure environmental sustainability. Additionally, despite wide-
ranging transboundary transactions on NTFPs across countries, no tangible legal framework exist to guide operations despite the fact that individual countries are ratified to many international conventions on the environment. Being part of the mandate of COMIFAC, this directive contributed in the implementation of its convergence plan.

The main objective of this directive is to enable national and regional processes to fittingly take into consideration NTFPs of plant origin in political, legal, fiscal and institutional exercises within the sub region. This has been designed for COMIFAC member States within the sub region with the aim of ensuring sustainable forest management.

This directive is made up of six parts and twenty three sections as presented in the annex. The full text of this directive could be downloaded from http://www.fao.org/forestry/media/14283/1/0/

References


Annex: Outline of sub regional directive on the sustainable management of NTFPs of plant origin in Central Africa

Part I: General Disposition
1. Object;
2. Target;
3. Definitions;
4. Principles of sustainable management;
5. Benefit sharing and redistribution of forest loyalties.

Part II: Access to NTFP
6. Types of access rights;
7. Users Rights;
9. Management Agreements
Part III: NTFP product chain
10. Extraction and Storage;
11. Transportation;
12. Transformation;
13. Commercialisation.
PART IV: Fiscal dispositions
14. Taxation;
15. Funding for NTFPs.
Part V: Contraventions and Penalties
16. Contraventions;
17. Penalty;
18. Control and Follow-up of the activities of the Filiere.
PART VI: Institutional and final dispositions
19. Institutional Dispositions;
20. Professional structures;
21. Capacity Building;
22. Statistics;
23. Implementation of the present directive.
ANNEXES
Annexe 1: Arguments and specifications on the different parts of the directive
Annexe 2: Documents for the demand of a professional card or harvesting permit
Annexe 3: Complementary comments
a) Socio-economic importance of NTFPs in Central Africa;
b) Definition of NTFPs;
c) Fiscal system relative to NTFPs in Central Africa.