



Sustainable Management of NTFPs in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic

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

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Introduction

- There is very little information on the socio-economic importance of NTFPs;
- IUCN through ITTO has received funding (CFC/ITTO/68 FT PPD 19/01 REV1 (I)) from the Common Fund for commodity (CFC) to carry out a sub regional study on the sustainable management of NTFPs;
- The main findings : categorises NTFPs; various uses and problems that may likely hamper their sustainable management and 3 project proposals formulated.
- Some innovative initiatives geared towards partnerships between some actors in the management of NTFPs



Rich Forests but Poor people

- The GDP of the countries concerned remains very low their resources and varied from 290 US\$ for CAR, 550 for Congo, 600 for Cameroon and 3300 for Gabon and most of these countries are considered highly indebted poor countries.

- The contribution of the forests to the GDP varies from 9% for Cameroon, 1.09% for Congo, 4.7% for Gabon and 9.7% for Central African Republic



Objectives of the study

- The overall objective : To improve knowledge on information related to the exploitation and marketing of NTFPs of the forest sector and their contribution to the economies of Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic.
- This also entails examining the various benefits gained by the local population and innovative uses of these products.
 - (1) Study the potential and socio-economic benefits that may increase sustainable exploitation of NTFPs in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic ;
 - (2) Evaluate the status of NTFPs in a bid to develop strategies and action plans to be implemented ;
 - (3) Contribute in the implementation of a regional synthesis document that was validated at a regional conference and whose outcomes shall be the basis for the formulation of project proposals.

Methodology (1)

- Carry out a literature review on production and marketing channels of NTFPs ;
- Identify the various types of NTFPs available ;
- Undertake field trips to the main NTFPs production areas at national and transboundary levels ;
- Undertake field trips to NTFPs marketing areas of rural and urban areas.

Methodology (2)

- 5) Study the optimal marketing channels for NTFPs ;
- (6) Draw up a local and national strategic action plan for NTFPs harvesting and marketing ;
- (7) Formulate and adopt recommendations made during a sub regional workshops (Douala-Cameroon from the 5th to the 6th of October 06;
- (8) Validate projects during national workshops organised in Gabon (22nd of November 2006), Central African Republic (30th of November 2007) and Congo (17th of January

Diverse but similar legislative framework

- Textual reforms in the forest domain
- The NTFP are not specifically regulated

High diversity of NTFP: plant origin and animal origin



High diversity

- Methods of classification vary from one country to another and the most prominent groups are organised around food, medical and magic-therapy and finally handicraft aspects, final usage, the form and /or the part used, or depending on their presence in the markets;
- **Two main groups** : NTFPs of animal origin and NTFPs of plant origin (plant and other related products);
- In the Central African Republic the classification of various NTFPs takes into consideration their market value and their importance to the national economy.;
- This classification or categorisation is in line with the proposals made by the FAO in 2000 (Walter, 2001 ; Tchatat et al , 2002 ; and Sunderland et al, 2004).

Phytotherapy

- The various parts used for plants are leaves, flowers, buds, roots, barks, sap, gum and resin, shoots, fruits and almond;
- As concerns animal parts, there are the hairs, bones, teeth, horns, droppings, claws, gastric organs and some internal organs (especially viscera);
- Many of the pharmaceutical preparations obtained following several operational processes such as softening, maceration, grinding up, pulping, and carbonisation are used simply or in conjunction with the so-called “vehicle” products;
- These are water, milk, alcohol, limejuice, wine, palm oil, kernel oil and karite butter. Besides these various forms of traditional pharmacopoeia, the forms of usage that are recorded are .





NTFP used for food

NTFPs used for food are many and varied. They include stalks, leaves, fruits, grains, buds, barks, roots, bulbs, rhizomes and underground tubers, meat, mushroom, insects and liquid products especially the sap of some wild plants

Other uses

- NTFPs are used in manufacturing works of art, commonly used items :bags, furniture, baskets, mats, food and non-food wrappings and the construction of huts;
- Under this usage, there are some animals such as the antelope, the crocodile whose skins are used in the manufacturing of drums or handbags;
- Furthermore, in Congo and Gabon empirical knowledge related to NTFPs is exploited in the area of handicraft (cultural), the production of tools and services. These uses are dominant in activities using rattan and textile fibres;
- Another common usage of NTFPs in Congo is the exploitation of their natural wrapping properties. Harvesting of these products mobilise many people and cities are, once more, the highest consumers.

Modes of intervention of the management

- The far away forest is the ideal place for harvesting various NTFPs, for example, caterpillars, gnetum, traditional pharmaceutical products, hunting products (bushmeat);
- At traditional level**, the exploitation of NTFP used to be more collective and it was usually the traditional ruler's decision in consultation with his notables and after consulting the community priest in order to obtain the endorsement or refusal of the gods;
- Socio-cultural aspects are also taken into consideration.** In fact, under the purview of taboos, food prohibitions, totems, the society has socio-religious relations with some plant and animal species.



Marketing Channels

- The intervention of various intermediaries is testimony of real enthusiasm caused by the exploitation of NTFPs;
- The channel linking the producer to the consumer is more recurrent in production centres (villages);
- Most of the time, the NTFPs market channels require the intervention of at least an intermediary (trader, transporter and /or an agent) between the producer and the consumer;
- In Cameroon, there are more than 150 NTFPs marketed at national, regional and international levels, especially honey, gum arabic, rattan and bamboos, cork, nuts, mushrooms, resins, essential oils, irvingia, gnetum, cola and certain parts of plants or animals used in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical products.



Institutional implication

- Insufficient implication of local communities in the forest management
- Articles 13 and 14 stipulate that : *“All forests fall under the national forest estate and constitute the exclusive property of the State (Article 13). Nobody can, within the areas of water resources and forests, freely or for commercial purposes exploit, harvest or process any natural products, without prior authorisation of the forestry administration. However, in order to ensure their subsistence, village communities enjoy their customary usufruct rights, according to terms and conditions determined by regulation (Article 4)” ..*
- Lack of coordination to a policy of forest management between public actors on the one hand and the local and indigenous communities on the other hand.
- Difficulties related to the implementation of this panoply of measures and with regard to low number of staff at the level of various administrations (Forestry. Environment. Health. Trade. Agriculture. Territorial

Main problems hampering the sustainable management and valorisation of NTFP (1)

- A less coherent policy: NTFPs are not sufficiently integrated in sectoral development policy ;
- Poor legislation on NTFPs: conventions and official instruments have been signed but there are still huge gaps in the contents of these documents ;
- Inadequate knowledge of NTFPs and their potential utilisation ;
- Lack of follow-up of data on NTFPs destined for export ;
- Lack of grass roots organisation: exploitation is done individually except for some products where there is a mixed organisation

Main problems hampering the sustainable management and valorisation of NTFP (2)

- Poorly adapted methods of exploitation lead to negative impact on the environment ;
- Limited access to promising markets: harvesters do not know or do not have enough information on the sale prices of the NTFPs products they produced beyond their area of production ;
- Lack of organisational means of actors of the NTFPs sub-sector for better sales of their products ;
- Lack of a policy of increased NTFPs processing;
- People involved in this activity have very capacity to invest.

Varied sources of NTFP

- The main NTFPs that are found in Gabon, Cameroon, Central African Republic and Congo come essentially from natural forests.
- The Other sources are:
 - Agro-forestry system (orchard)
 - Agricultural production system
 - Domestication
- The most remarkable groups are based on the aspects of food, medicinal and magic-therapy plants and finally handicrafts.



The challenge of the sustainable management

- The sustainable management of NTFPs depends not only on good knowledge of their ecology but also and mostly the vitality of their population (regeneration, habitat loss and peeling, etc;).
- Often-unsustainable methods of harvesting For NTFPs of plant origin : the intensity of the exploitation depends on the domestic and /or commercial demand of the product (Tchatat, 1999).
- The modes of access to these resources may be free access or controlled access.
- The impact of this exploitation is related to the intensity of the harvest and the organ



Regional Innovative initiatives

- **Field innovative initiatives**

- The FAO Project “Contribution of non-timber forest products to food security in Africa” (Congo, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea.
- The FAO – ICRAF – CIFOR - SNV Project “Mobilisation and capacity building of small and medium businesses” Cameroon and the DRC.
- The IUCN Livelihoods, Landscapes Strategy (LLS), DRC , Cameroon, Central African Republic and Congo.

- **Involvement of COMIFAC**

- Synergy between partners above-mentioned has made it possible for issues related to NTFPs to be better mainstreamed in the COMIFAC Convergence Plan.

Project proposals

- 3 workshops ((Gabon, CAR and Congo) were organized to validate the project ideas and subsequently set the scene for the elaboration of the project document to be submitted to ITTO
 - Analyze the needs and/or constraints observed within the NTFP sector in the various countries ;
 - Define the main constraint that the project will eradicate upon approval;
 - Define the main objectives of the project document.
- 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 of the project documents and the expected output that will help in the development of this sector.
- These project documents are currently being finalized for submission for funding in the three countries.

Conclusions (1)

- Thanks to the Project, knowledge on information related to the exploitation and marketing of NTFPs of the forest sector and their contribution to the economies of Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic are improved
- The synergy developed between FAO and IUCN was very instrumental in the realization of the national workshop and country project documents. The close collaboration between consultants and constant communication eased the realization of the project reports and subsequent follow-up. The fact that the regional coordinator of the project was based in the IUCN main office was of advantage in activity implementation, follow-up and planning of various phases.
- The presence of a participant from Sudan during the sub regional workshop widened the scope of lesson learning and experiences sharing on medicinal and aromatic plants.

Conclusions (2)

- The processes of amending the project documents to be submitted for funding was very slow because of the interlink between several actors with diverse schedules and limited to no financial motivation for carrying out the activity. This has delayed the completion of project documents to be submitted for funding in the various countries.
- Follow-up the engagement taken by COMIFAC's during the sub regional workshop in Douala to ensure that all member countries of the ITTO in the COMIFAC network are involved in NTFP development efforts. Ensure the proper insertion of NTFPs into and implementation of NTFP related strategic axis of the convergence plan. Encourage and multiply NTFPs related debates in locale, national and regional spaces and fora.
- ITTO and other partners could provide a support to the project documents developed within the various countries

Thank you very much

