



Enhancing the Contribution of Non-Wood Forest Products to Food Security in Central Africa (GCP/RAF/479/AFB)

1. Introduction

The Congo Basin is among the world's major reservoirs of biological diversity. The biological resources are exploited by 70 million persons to satisfy their subsistence needs, income generation and employment. The major NWFP in the region are edible and medicinal plants, bush meat, insects, honey, rattan and other fibers for building shelter or tools. In general, due to rapid population growth, the agricultural production of the region is insufficient and does not cover all food needs of the population.

The project will contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) through its activities geared in favor of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality, sustaining the environment and instituting an international/regional partnership for development.

2. FAO and NWFP in Central Africa

FAO has long standing experience on providing technical advice on NWFP management and related policy formulation in Central Africa. The Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) is FAO's main regional counterpart organization in Central Africa. Various field projects in support to its Executive Secretariat and its Convergence Plan have been implemented in conjunction with Central African Governments. The current project benefits from this institutional stronghold, the well-established networking, the profound commitment within FAO, COMIFAC and concerned Governments.

Strategic Alliance

Project financed by the African Development Bank (ADB) through the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF);

Regional level: Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC), FAO (SFC & SFE) and the Regional Project Coordination based in Libreville, Gabon;

National level: *Burundi* (Ministry of Water, Environment, Territorial Administration and Urbanism), *Chad* (Ministry of Environment, Water and Halieutic Resources), *Equatorial Guinea* (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry), *Rwanda* (Ministry of Natural Resources), *Sao Tome and Principe* (Ministry of Agriculture, fishery and Rural Development);

Executing Agency: FAO; **Funding:** 3.37 million Euros.

Duration: 4 february 2014 - 3 february 2017 (3 years).

3. Project Activities

The project contributes to poverty alleviation and sustainable forest management in Central Africa in general and specifically in Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe through the valorization of non-wood forest products by local people, including support to developing small scale forest enterprises.

The priority of the project is to promote at local, national and sub-regional levels a policy and institutional framework that governs the access of local people to resources and markets for NWFP. It will also develop the capacities of communities and generate information on the importance of NWFP in economic and social development.



Women play a key role in the NWFP sector in Central Africa (Photo by Ousseynou Ndoye)

Regional level: COMIFAC member countries

- Act as a regional NWFP information point.
- Develop policies and strategies for including NWFP utilization into sustainable forests management.
- Consolidate technical knowledge and best practices in the NWFP sector.
- Develop capacity and provide training.

National level: Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe

- Advice on national policy formulation and review based on the *Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and the Sub regional directives for a sustainable use of NWFP of plant origin in Central Africa*;
http://www.comifac.org/Members/tvtchuante/directives-sous-regionales-relatives-a-la-gestion-durable-des-pfnl-dorigine-vegetal/view?set_language=en
- Support to the development of products, markets and small and medium forest based enterprises.

Local level: Pilot sites in Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe

- Create and strengthening capacities of small and medium forest based enterprises to improve their organization, processing, commercialization and marketing of more value added NWFP.
- Consolidate and disseminate harvesting and processing methods for a sustainable and participatory management of NWFP.

Project beneficiaries: Rural communities, government agencies, NGOs, consumers, Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC.