Weighing up the pros and cons of commercializing non-timber forest products

RIU

Validated RNRRS Output.

Three new tools are now available to help weigh up the pros and cons of commercializing non-timber forest products. A book looks at how harvesting and selling forest products could make a difference to the lives of the poor and what factors need to be considered. A manual, developed and tested in rural communities, maps out ways to scale-up, add value and overcome obstacles along the marketing chain. Then, a computer program helps compare options to reduce the risk of failure. National networks, researchers and development agencies already draw on these tools to help shape their programmes. Both producing and importing countries and regions use them—Mexico, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Vietnam, the Nile Basin, Sahelian West Africa, the Mekong Delta and the Philippines.

Project Ref: **FRP42:**
Topic: **5. Rural Development Boosters: Improved Marketing, Processing & Storage**
Lead Organisation: **Trafiic International, UK**
Source: **Forestry Research Programme**

Document Contents:

Description, Validation, Current Situation, Current Promotion, Impacts On Poverty, Environmental Impact, Annex,

Description

Research into Use
NR International
Park House
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Geographical regions included:

Africa, Asia, Bolivia, Mexico,

Target Audiences for this content:

Forest-dependent poor,

FRP42

A.   Description of the research output(s)

1. Working title of output or cluster of outputs.
In addition, you are free to suggest a shorter more imaginative working title/acronym of 20 words or less.

Policy information, decision-making tools and research methods to support community-based NTFP commercialisation that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

2. Name of relevant RNRRS Programme(s) commissioning supporting research and also indicate other funding sources, if applicable.

The CEPFOR project was funded by the Forestry Research Programme, which also funded other projects on NTFP commercialisation with which there was some informal exchange of information (particularly the 'winners and losers' project R7795).

There was further exchange of information and analysis tools with the CIFOR global comparison of NTFPs (Belcher *et al.*, 2005), which was part-funded by DFID through its support to the CG system. The data from the 61 case studies collected by the CIFOR project are currently being used to validate the CEPFOR Decision Support Tool (DST) (see Q10) in a small additional contract between FRP and Bournemouth University.

3. Provide relevant R numbers (and/or programme development/dissemination reference numbers covering supporting research) along with the institutional partners (with individual contact persons (if appropriate)) involved in the project activities. As with the question above, this is primarily to allow for the legacy of the RNRRS to be acknowledged during the RIUP activities.

The CEPFOR project (R7925) was implemented by UNEP-WCMC in collaboration with partners in the UK, Mexico and Bolivia. The project leader at UNEP-WCMC was Elaine Marshall (marshallelaine@googlemail.com).

The Overseas Development Institute, London, (contact: Dr. Kate Schreckenberg on k.schreckenberg@odi.org.uk), was responsible for developing the research methods and oversight of the socio-economic data analysis.

Professor Adrian Newton of Bournemouth University (ANetwon@bournemouth.ac.uk) initially supervised the project at UNEP-WCMC and was responsible for development of the electronic decision support tool.

Collaboration with Fauna and Flora International in Nicaragua focused on designing the initial inception workshops and carrying out an information needs assessment in Central America during the third year of the project.

In Mexico, three NGOs worked with the project, carrying out research and data analysis on a range of NTFP commercialisation cases:
- Methodus Consultora, Crespo 524 D, Col Central, Oaxaca, Oax CP 68000 Mexico (Contact: Fabrice Edouard on fabrice@raises.org)

- Grupo de Estudios Ambientales (GEA), Allende 7, Santa Ursula Coapa, Mexico DF CP 04650, Mexico (Contact: Cati Illsley on macarena@laneta.apc.org)
- Grupo Mesófilo, Pino Suárez 205, Centro Histórico Oaxaca, Oaxaca 68000, Mexico (Contact: Janett de los Santos on janett@yahoo.com and Juan Carlos Flores on skatoflores@hotmail.com)

An important partner for dissemination in Mexico was the RAISES (Red de Aprendizaje e Intercambio para la Sistematización de experiencias hacia la Sustentabilidad; Learning and Exchange Network for Systematizing Experiences Towards Sustainability) network, which coordinated all the book and policy-briefing launch activities and has taken forward the project's policy messages. Contact: Fabrice Edouard on fabrice@raises.org.

In Bolivia, the main partner was CARE Bolivia, which carried out research in several of its project sites. Contact: Eric Arancibia on eharancibia@yahoo.com.ar.

4. Describe the RNRRS output or cluster of outputs being proposed and when was it produced? **(max. 400 words)**. *This requires a clear and concise description of the output(s) and the problem the output(s) aimed to address. Please incorporate and highlight (in bold) key words that would/could be used to select your output when held in a database.*

The project produced three principal outputs in January-March 2006:

Output 1. A **book** (Marshall *et al.*, 2006a) – in English and Spanish – analysing the factors influencing success in **NTFP commercialisation**, drawing on lessons from Mexico and Bolivia.
Based on 19 case studies, the book and associated policy briefs provide an analysis of how **NTFP value chains** function and how different NTFP commercialisation strategies impact on **poverty**, **women's livelihoods**, the resource base and access rights, and suggest **policy interventions** to improve the success of NTFP commercialisation. Targeted at decision-makers, the book addresses the lack of understanding about the factors that determine whether and how NTFP commercialisation can contribute to **sustainable rural development** in highly marginalised communities.

Output 2. An **electronic decision-support tool** (DST) for use by decision-makers to evaluate the potential for successful NTFP commercialisation (English and Spanish).
Responding to the need of decision-makers to decide which NTFP commercialisation activities to support and with what kinds of **policy interventions**, this **expert system** allows users to compare the potential success of different NTFP development options, assess the opportunities and constraints of current NTFP initiatives, and explore the potential livelihood impacts of different **policy options**. Structured around a **sustainable rural livelihoods framework**, the DST requires the user to score 66 factors – including the characteristics of the product to be commercialised, the socio-economic characteristics of the communities involved, and characteristics of the value chain. The resulting insights can contribute to more effective financial, technical and political interventions that help to increase the value of forests through **sustainable development of NTFP resources**, while reducing the risk of failure for poor producers, processors and traders.

Output 3. A methods **manual** (Marshall *et al.*, 2006b) providing practical tools for **NTFP value chain analysis**, for use alone or in support of the DST (Spanish).

The manual addresses the previous lack of an integrated, multi-disciplinary, methodology for NTFP value chain research that can guide external interventions and support community decisions concerning NTFP commercialisation. Developed and tested with rural communities, the manual is targeted at organisations that support community-based NTFP commercialisation. It provides a range of locally adaptable **research tools** that can generate the information needed to help identify opportunities and obstacles to NTFP commercialisation at community level, and along the marketing chain. By providing guidance on participatory objective setting and the development of **indicators**, the manual can also support establishment of **monitoring and evaluation** of the impact of NTFP commercialisation.

5. What is the type of output(s) being described here?
Please tick one or more of the following options.

Product	Technology	Service	Process or Methodology	Policy	Other Please specify
			X	X	

6. What is the main commodity (ies) upon which the output(s) focussed? Could this output be applied to other commodities, if so, please comment

The outputs focus on plant-based Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in Mexico and Bolivia. Some of the policy results in the book are likely to be applicable to NTFPs in other countries, to animal-based NTFPs and to non-traditional agricultural products. This also applies to the methods manual and to the electronic DST. The latter is based on a Bayesian Belief Network, which could be used to build DSTs for many other natural resource management decisions.

7. What production system(s) does/could the output(s) focus upon?
Please tick one or more of the following options. Leave blank if not applicable

Semi-Arid	High potential	Hillsides	Forest-Agriculture	Peri-urban	Land water	Tropical moist forest	Cross-cutting
							X

8. What farming system(s) does the output(s) focus upon?
Please tick one or more of the following options (see Annex B for definitions).
Leave blank if not applicable

Smallholder rainfed humid	Irrigated	Wetland rice based	Smallholder rainfed highland	Smallholder rainfed dry/cold	Dualistic	Coastal artisanal fishing

NTFPs are collected from a wide range of land uses from natural forests to weedy verges along roads and trees retained in fields. They are not linked to any specific farming system but are particularly important in marginal contexts where their existence may supplement farming activities, providing income or other inputs during the

agricultural slack season.

*9. How could value be added to the output or additional constraints faced by poor people addressed by clustering this output with research outputs from other sources (RNRRS and non RNRRS)? (**max. 300 words**).*

Please specify what other outputs your output(s) could be clustered. At this point you should make reference to the circulated list of RNRRS outputs for which proformas are currently being prepared.

The CEPFOR outputs focussed on the value chain of plant NTFPs. They could benefit from being clustered with the following RNRRS projects:

- R8305 – has a greater focus on resource inventory and management issues, specifically relating to medicinal bark in southern Africa. Good potential for collaboration to improve understanding, research methods and decision-making tools to analyse the full value chain with a view to identifying stakeholders with a specific interest in protecting the resource.

- R8295 – produced a methodology for planning sustainable management of medicinal plants in India and Nepal. Good potential for collaboration on developing integrated methodology for sustainable resource management and marketing of medicinal plants in Asia.

- R7285 – produced a manual on viability and potential of ethical trade in all types of forest products (NTFPs, agroforestry products, timber). Good potential for collaboration to incorporate the additional dimension of ethical trade into the CEPFOR DST and methods manual.

The CEPFOR outputs could also benefit from collaboration with some non-RNRRS projects:

- TRAFFIC project (World Bank funded) on wildlife trade in East Asia is testing similar research hypotheses as the CEPFOR project, relating to the relationship between livelihoods and resource use. Good potential for collaboration on (i) broadening the CEPFOR policy recommendations (output 1) to take into account wild meat and other animal trade issues, (ii) adapting the CEPFOR DST (output 2) to incorporate factors specific to animals and highlight commercialisation impacts not just on livelihoods but also on resource conservation, and (iii) expanding the CEPFOR manual to integrate animal specific methods.

- Stellenbosch University and Pennsylvania State University have applied for funds to work on NTFP enterprises in Mozambique and South Africa, a project with which collaboration on value chain analysis methods (output 3) and interventions (output 1) could be very fruitful.

Validation

B.   Validation of the research output(s)

*10. **How** were the output(s) validated and **who** validated them?*

*Please provide brief description of method(s) used and consider application, replication, adaptation and/or adoption in the context of any partner organisation and user groups involved. In addressing the "who" component detail which group(s) did the validation e.g. end users, intermediary organisation, government department, aid organisation, private company etc... This section should also be used to detail, if applicable, to which social group, gender, income category the validation was applied and any increases in productivity observed during validation **(max. 500 words)**.*

Policy recommendations (output 1) can be considered validated if they lead to changes in policies or are recognised by other organisations as being worthy of promotion. The CEPFOR recommendations have been widely promoted within Mexico by the RAISES network. They project's findings were also presented at the CATIE international conference on "Small and Medium Forest Enterprise Development for Poverty Reduction: Opportunities and Challenges in Globalizing Markets" (Costa Rica, May 23-25, 2006) and will be included in a forthcoming Spanish publication for dissemination in Central and South America entitled "Small and medium forest enterprises for poverty reduction: perspectives from the field".

At an international level, the policy briefings have met with a positive reaction. A review in the *International Forestry Review* (Vol 8(3), 2006) considers the book (output 1) a 'must read' for 'anyone interested in NTFPs, rural development and small enterprise development'. The policy findings were taken up by the World Resources Report 2005 ('The Wealth of the Poor: Managing Ecosystems to Fight Poverty"), and were further promoted by USAID/FRAME through their electronic conference on natural products in rural enterprises (June 2006), as well as being featured on the website of Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

The DST (output 2) was developed on the basis of information collected in 19 case study communities. It was first validated internally by testing it with an independent set of data collected from the same communities (Newton *et al.*, 2006). A second validation is now in progress, which consists of testing the DST with data from 61 case studies, collected by CIFOR during their global comparison (Belcher *et al.*, 2005). This international validation exercise is being carried out jointly by CIFOR and by Prof Adrian Newton at Bournemouth University and results will be available in early 2007.

The methods manual (output 3) has been through a process of internal project validation. All the methods were used by project partners in Mexico and Bolivia and modified over a period of two years through a series of iterative meetings followed by further testing. However, no monitoring system is in place to determine the extent to which the methods manual has been used or adapted by user groups outside of the project.

*11. **Where and when** have the output(s) been validated?*

*Please indicate the places(s) and country(ies), any particular social group targeted and also indicate in which production system and farming system, using the options provided in questions 7 and 8 respectively, above **(max 300 words)**.*

The project outputs were only finalised and promoted between January and March 2006. There has, therefore, been little time for external validation. As explained in Q10, internal validation (within the project) of outputs 2 and

3 took place in Mexico and Bolivia during the last two years of the project (2003-5). External validation of output 2 is currently taking place using an international set of data. Validation of output 1, in the form of uptake and further promotion of the project's policy recommendations is ongoing at various levels: national, regional and international.

Current Situation

C.   *Current situation*

12. **How and by whom** *are the outputs currently being used? Please give a brief description* **(max. 250 words)**.

The RAISES network, several members of which participated in CEPFOR research, is the key organisation that continues to promote the use of CEPFOR outputs in Mexico, both within and beyond its members. RAISES has put together a project proposal, being circulated to national and international donors, to strengthen NTFP management and commercialisation plans in several states. This would involve holding regional workshops to identify organisations interested in strengthening NTFP value chains, training them in the use of the CEPFOR outputs (1, 2 and 3) and additional ones relating to resource inventories and management, and support the development of activities and inter-institutional collaboration.

At the international level, the CEPFOR policy findings (output 1) have been used by the two lead researchers (Elaine Marshall and Kate Schreckenberg) to shape debates on NTFP issues during an electronic forum (June 2006) and an international workshop on NTFPs in rural enterprises (Washington DC, 3-5 Oct 2006), both organised by IRG/FRAME for USAID.

Insights from the project have further been applied by Kate Schreckenberg in the development of a proposal for a new programme of support to poor rural producers engaging in the global economy. They are also being used by Elaine Marshall and Adrian Newton to inform the research and analytical approaches of a TRAFFIC project, funded by the World Bank, examining the drivers of the wildlife trade (including both animal and plant based NTFPs), associated livelihood contributions and the impact of trade-related interventions.

13. **Where** *are the outputs currently being used? As with Question 11 please indicate place(s) and countries where the outputs are being used* **(max. 250 words).**

There is currently no monitoring system in place to determine where the project outputs are being used.

We assume that outputs 2 and 3 are being used by some of the participants that took part in the launch workshops in Mexico and Bolivia.

The RAISES network of NGOs and researchers in Mexico have made particular use of the first output – the book and summarised versions in the form of policy briefs – to strengthen their work on improving public policy and regulations relating to NTFP commercialisation. The policy findings may also be having an impact on other organisations to whom they have been disseminated.

At an international level, the project's research and policy findings are being applied by the CEPFOR researchers in the development of new projects implemented or to be implemented in a wide range of Asian and African countries. These include:

- The TRAFFIC study mentioned above which focuses on wildlife trade in and from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam, with work also extending to countries that are markets for natural resources from these countries, particularly China.
- A proposed programme of research on the theme: 'Productive Strategies for Poor Rural Households to Participate Successfully in Global Economic Processes', to be managed by ODI. This will take a value chain approach and have a strong focus on natural products with proposed activities in the Nile Basin, the Sahelian belt of West Africa, the Mekong Delta, the Philippines and South Asia.

14. What is the scale of current use? Indicating how quickly use was established and whether usage is still spreading (max 250 words).

In the first six months of 2006, eight of the 25 most frequently downloaded documents from the UNEP-WCMC website were CEPFOR reports, indicating great public interest in the theme. However, there is no monitoring system in place to determine how widely the manual and DST are being used.

15. In your experience what programmes, platforms, policy, institutional structures exist that have assisted with the promotion and/or adoption of the output(s) proposed here and in terms of capacity strengthening what do you see as the key facts of success? (max 350 words).

Stakeholder involvement in the research is one of the best ways of ensuring that research outputs are used and disseminated. In Mexico, several of the research partners are members of the RAISES network. This Ford-funded network consists of six NGOs and academic researchers who work with civil society organisations in Guerrero, Chiapas and Michoacán, with management and commercialisation of NTFPs as one of its principal themes. RAISES is the most effective platform for continued dissemination of the project's research findings in Mexico as well as their application within its own and its members' activities. Having a network that includes institutional and individual members helps to overcome the continuity problem that has arisen in political and administrative circles.

The fact that the Bolivian partner, CARE Bolivia, is primarily an implementing organisation, resulted in promotion and adoption of the project's findings within its network of activities.

At international level, the UNEP publicity network has been an important institutional structure for widespread dissemination of the project's policy findings (output 1) as has the website of the ODI.

Capacity-building of project participants was an essential focus of the project, given that the partners were primarily development organisations rather than researchers. The approach taken (successfully) was to organise frequent meetings of all partners at which different elements of the research agenda were discussed, methods developed (followed by field-testing) and amended in an iterative manner. These were complemented by supervisory visits during fieldwork and email support during analysis. The use of an agreed set of research hypotheses helped to focus support on specific research and analysis methods.

Current Promotion

D.   Current promotion/uptake pathways

*16. **Where** is promotion currently taking place? Please indicate for each country specified detail what promotion is taking place, by whom and indicate the scale of current promotion **(max 200 words)**.*

The project had no funds for promotion and training beyond the launch workshops in Mexico (Oaxaca and Mexico City) and Bolivia (La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz). These included presentation of the policy findings and training in the use of the manual and DST. It should be possible to follow-up with the workshop participants to monitor their use of the project's outputs.

An additional launch of the policy findings took place in London in March 2006, followed by a presentation at an international conference on small and medium forest enterprises at CATIE in May 2006.

No further promotion has been funded or organised through the project.

The RAISES network, however, continues to promote the project's findings at a range of regional meetings within Mexico. Furthermore, it is circulating a proposal to donors for a project to strengthen NTFP management and commercialisation plans in several states. This would include training organisations interested in strengthening NTFP value chains in the use of the CEPFOR outputs (1, 2 and 3).

At a regional and international level, the policy outputs continue to be disseminated in an opportunistic manner by research partners attending conferences and becoming involved in new projects.

*17. What are the current barriers preventing or slowing the adoption of the output(s)? Cover here institutional issues, those relating to policy, marketing, infrastructure, social exclusion etc. **(max 200 words)**.*

In both Mexico and Bolivia, a lack of administrative continuity will hamper future uptake of CEPFOR policy-level suggestions (output 1) and promotion of the use of outputs 2 and 3. In Mexico, the federal administration changed on the 1st of December, 2006, removing many of the political decision-makers who participated in project meetings and workshops. In Bolivia, political change coincided with the launching of the project outputs, such that many of the staff with whom the project had contact are no longer working for the government. Furthermore, the Forest Department and the Protected Areas administration are both going through difficult political times that make any operational activities difficult, let alone application of the new tools suggested by the project.

In general there is a problem (highlighted in the project's findings) that there is no single government institution responsible for NTFPs, which means that adoption of the project's outputs requires coordinated action by many different players.

*18. What changes are needed to remove/reduce these barriers to adoption? This section could be used to identify perceived capacity related issues **(max 200 words)**.*

There is no way to ensure political continuity. However, a specific dissemination phase, of at least one year, added to the end of the project would help to ensure that the outputs are disseminated to sufficient people to create a critical mass of potential users. During this time a greater focus on dissemination via NGO, civil society and researcher networks is needed.

Support to national-level coordinating bodies for NTFPs would also be helpful, bringing together multiple stakeholders to assess where and how to implement different recommendations and apply research and decision-making tools.

19. What lessons have you learnt about the best ways to get the outputs used by the largest number of poor people? (max 300 words).

None of the CEPFOR outputs were developed for direct use by poor people. Rather the intention was for organisations working with poor people to engage with the policy findings and to employ the DST and research methods. Working through national networks of NGOs and researchers as in the case of the Mexican RAISES network, appears to be an effective way of reaching relevant organisations and individuals.

Impacts On Poverty

E.   Impacts on poverty to date

20. Where have impact studies on poverty in relation to this output or cluster of outputs taken place? This should include any formal poverty impact studies (and it is appreciated that these will not be commonplace) and any less formal studies including any poverty mapping-type or monitoring work which allow for some analysis on impact on poverty to be made. Details of any cost-benefit analyses may also be detailed at this point. Please list studies here.

We are not aware of any poverty impact studies that may have been carried out specifically in relation to the CEPFOR project outputs.

However, the importance of NTFPs in sustaining people's livelihoods is widely accepted (Falconer, 1990; Scoones *et al.*, 1992) and is one of the two main driving forces behind donor support to NTFP commercialisation initiatives, the other being resource conservation. The increasing focus of development policy on poverty reduction has, however, brought with it a need for unequivocal evidence about whether and how much NTFP commercialisation can contribute to poverty reduction (Wunder, 2001; Arnold, 2002). The CEPFOR project is only one of several studies that have sought to fill this gap. CIFOR has carried out a global comparative study of 61 NTFP cases (Belcher *et al.*, 2005), which has examined the impact of NTFP commercialisation on livelihoods, grouping activities into three groups depending on their contribution to the household income and main mode of production. Sheona Shackleton's work in South Africa has highlighted the role of domestic trade of NTFPs in supporting livelihoods, particularly for marginalised women.

Based on its case studies in Bolivia and Mexico, the CEPFOR project distinguished three types of NTFP activity

with respect to poverty reduction:

- *'Safety nets'* prevent people from falling into greater poverty by reducing their vulnerability to risk. They are particularly important in times of crisis and unusual need, with many families only engaging in NTFP activities when subsistence agriculture or cash crops fail, or when illness hits the family. It is particularly true of products that are available all year round because, as one Bolivian incense collector explained: 'the knowledge that incense is available to be harvested and traded acts as a guarantee that, no matter what, some income can be earned'.

- *'Gap-filling' NTFP activities* provide an income that is supplementary to more important farm and off-farm income-generating activities. These activities are carried out on a regular basis, often in the non-agricultural season and contribute between 7 and 95% of cash income to the household. The proportion of income contributed depends in part on the seasonal availability of the product (those that are available for longer periods of time often contribute more to the household economy) and on the other economic opportunities available to families. Although many NTFP-based activities generate only small amounts of income, the timing of this income may increase its relative importance. They play a key role in income-spreading and generally make poverty more bearable through improved nutrition or higher income but do not necessarily make people less poor.

- *'Stepping stone' activities* help to make people less poor. Ruiz Pérez *et al* (2004) suggest that it is only in areas that are well integrated into the cash economy that some NTFP producers are able to pursue a 'specialised' strategy in which the NTFP contributes more than 50 per cent of total household income and collectors and producers tend to be better off than their peers. In the CEPFOR cases, no single NTFP activity could be classed as a 'stepping stone'. Nevertheless, depending on the degree of intensity with which a household engaged in them, several activities could act as 'stepping stones' for individual families. In the case of wild mushroom harvesting in Oaxaca, for example, occasional collectors only harvested about 10kg per season compared with 70kg for average collectors and 300kg for a small group of serious collectors. For some of the latter, their mushroom income was sufficient to enable them to send a family member to work in the US.

The CEPFOR project itself was undertaken, in part, to assess the impact of NTFP commercialisation on poverty. Its partner organisations carried out enterprise budgets and cost-benefit analyses for different marketing strategies of 10 products and adapted their activities according to the findings (e.g. increasing the focus on product quality through grading and improved communication between producers and buyers). No formal analysis has been carried out but anecdotal evidence from the partners suggests that the case study communities have benefited from participating in the research.

21.   Based on the evidence in the studies listed above, for each country detail how the poor have benefited from the application and/or adoption of the output(s) **(max. 500 words)**:

- *What positive impacts on livelihoods have been recorded and over what time period have these impacts been observed? These impacts should be recorded against the capital assets (human, social, natural, physical and, financial) of the livelihoods framework;*
- *For whom i.e. which type of person (gender, poverty group (see glossary for definitions) has there been a positive impact;*

- *Indicate the number of people who have realised a positive impact on their livelihood;*
- *Using whatever appropriate indicator was used detail what was the average percentage increase recorded*

Because the outputs were only launched in Jan-March 2006, and no monitoring system is in place, we have no formal evidence for the poverty impacts of the CEPFOR project. Impacts we would expect to see include:

- Improved policy coherence relating to NTFP resource management and trade with a clear point of call for producers and regulations that do not discriminate against the rural poor;
- Rural livelihood support policies which go beyond a narrow focus on one product or sector and support NTFP activities as part of a diversified livelihood strategy;
- Promotion of local regulatory mechanisms for resource access and management, which may be the most effective in ensuring equitable access to NTFPs and sustainable supplies;
- Recognition of the commercial potential of NTFP enterprises and support to credit provision that is accessible to the rural poor and small-scale entrepreneurs;
- Policy interventions which improve access to education and information, specifically in relation to business skills, thereby increasing opportunities for more people to take on an entrepreneurial role;
- Policy interventions which recognise the role of all actors in a value chain and promote communication and collaboration between them, with possible grants or tax breaks for socially concerned entrepreneurs;
- At community level, a focus on improved organisation to increase the market power of NTFP producers and processors and decrease their vulnerability to external shocks;
- Provision of opportunities for greater involvement of women in NTFP activities that accommodate the constraints of traditional domestic duties;
- At producer level, provision of technical know-how and organisational skills to ensure sustainable resource management and harvesting, domestication where appropriate, and product processing;
- The development of mechanisms (e.g. certification and geographical indications) which value the origin and identity of the product.

Resulting from the above activities, we would expect to see more people engaging in NTFP value chains that are transparent, socially just, environmentally sound and provide higher returns for participants.

Environmental Impact

H.   Environmental impact

*24. What are the direct and indirect environmental benefits related to the output(s) and their outcome(s)? **(max 300 words)***

This could include direct benefits from the application of the technology or policy action with local governments or multinational agencies to create environmentally sound policies or programmes. Any supporting and appropriate

evidence can be provided in the form of an annex.

No monitoring of environmental impacts has taken place since the outputs were launched in early 2006. However, the process of research did lead to improved environmental sustainability of a number of the products studied through better organisation of producers and more availability and dissemination of information relating to resource harvesting and management.

*25. Are there any adverse environmental impacts related to the output(s) and their outcome(s)? **(max 100 words)***

We are not aware of any adverse impacts. However, the project found that increased commercialisation of NTFPs initially leads to overexploitation of the resource in 75% of cases. The type of tenure (individual or communal) and availability of external support are important factors in how producers overcome this problem. There is strong justification, therefore, for disseminating the outputs of this project together with those of other projects (as listed in Q9 and Q22), which have focused more strongly on resource harvesting and management issues.

*26. Do the outputs increase the capacity of poor people to cope with the effects of climate change, reduce the risks of natural disasters and increase their resilience? **(max 200 words)***

By improving the success of NTFP commercialisation, the three outputs reduce the vulnerability of poor people (producers, processors and traders) to disasters ranging from illness within the family to crop loss or other natural disasters. The outputs specifically promote the consideration of NTFP commercialisation as one of a number of rural livelihood activities, highlighting the potential of NTFP activities to help households achieve a more diversified and hence more resilient livelihood (as opposed to diversification out of desperation).

Value chains, particularly for internationally traded NTFP, can be notoriously faddish. The project outputs help communities select products that are less likely to be subject to substitution or changes in fashion. They also increase the potential sustainability of the value chain by promoting an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different actors and the potential bottlenecks in the value chain, emphasising the need for communication between actors in the value chain, and recommending a focus on product quality and continued innovation.

Annex

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