



Title: Sustainable Commercialization of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in Kenya: a situational analysis

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INTRODUCTION

- The NTFPs refer to all the resources/products (other than industrial round wood and derived sawn timber, wood chips, wood-based panels, and pulp), that may be extracted from the forest ecosystem and are utilized within the household or are marketed or have social, cultural, or religious significance (FAO, 1990)
- NTFPs are important in poverty reduction and bio-diversity conservation (FAO, 1995; Marshall et al., 2006).
- To have sustainable commercialization of NTFPs, there is a need for a structured management strategy for NTFPs in Kenya.
- A situational analysis of the NTFP sub-sector in Kenya was undertaken as the initial step towards the development of the strategy.

METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

- Discussions and consultations with relevant stakeholders within Nairobi, Isiolo, Marsabit, and Laikipia, Coast, Eastern and Lake Basin regions of Kenya.
- 50 institutions from the government, non-governmental organizations, private companies, and community associations.
- A review of relevant documents on NTFPs in Kenya
- Based on the information gathered, SWOT analysis for the sub-sector was done.

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- The review identified 16 priority NTFPs namely:
 1. Gum arabic,
 2. Gum resins,
 3. Seed and essential oils,
 4. Indigenous fruits,
 5. African indigenous vegetables,
 6. Medicinal plants e.g., aloes,
 7. Forage (foliage and grass),
 8. Barks and natural fiber,
 9. Poles,
 10. Withies & fitos,
 11. Forest insects,
 12. Ecosystem services,
 13. Fungi and associated microorganisms,
 14. Fyes & tannins,
 15. Wood fuel and
 16. Ecotourism.

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: STRENGTHS

- Many rural dwellers depend on NTFPs for their livelihood
- Availability of requisite skills
- Availability of NTFPs in the wild and in plantations
- Existence of relevant legislation, regulations, policies, and strategies
- Availability institutions for capacity building, coaching, mentoring, research and development
- The existence of new cutting age technologies
- Availability of information of some NTFPs such as gums, gum resins, wood fuel, aloes, honey, and bee products

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: STRENGTHS

- . Existence of commodity groups and cooperatives for several NTFPs
- . Provision of financing such as grants to support NTFPs programs and projects by government agencies
- . Good returns realized from some NTFPs encourages private sector investment
- . Ready support from Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development on exports, trade negotiations, commodity exchange and standardization of products through Kenya Bureau of standards

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:WEAKNESSES

Classification Weaknesses

Production

- Rapid decline in forest cover
- Low adoption rates of best practices
- Poor and unsustainable production practices leading to low yields of NTFPs and damage to trees
- Inadequate information on production potential and their variations among sites, counties and varieties
- Poor quality of products

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: WEAKNESSES

Classification Weaknesses

Production

- Unsustainable production (growth in the wild and limited domestication)
- Limited/Inadequate 'clean' propagation material (seeds, suckers, and stems) for products such as aloes
- Incidences of pests and diseases
- Low yield of products per plant
- Over exploitation of the preferred tree species by the communities
- Inadequate quality control laboratory equipment

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: WEAKNESSES

Classification	Weaknesses
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="415 415 2430 472">● Inadequate data on available quantities of the IFTS, collected and marketed<li data-bbox="415 496 2481 629">● Weak market information systems on market access, requirements, and price trends<li data-bbox="415 654 2430 715">● Inadequate capacity to bulk enough quantities and lack of reliable suppliers<li data-bbox="415 739 2010 801">● Inadequate markets for some of the products such as aloes<li data-bbox="415 825 2354 886">● Poorly developed markets and low investments on market development.<li data-bbox="415 911 2277 972">● Inadequate incubation and commercialization of developed products.<li data-bbox="415 996 2303 1058">● Inadequate marketing skills by the local communities and cooperatives<li data-bbox="415 1082 2193 1143">● Inadequate networking of market actors and poor market linkages

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: WEAKNESSES

Classification	Weaknesses
Policy and institutional barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● NTFPs not adequately acknowledged or mainstreamed in Kenya's development policies and legislation● No NTFPs strategy at the national nor county levels● Lack of a legal framework by the county governments to oversee investment and development of NTFPs● Lack of specific national and county statutory boards on NTFPs● Lack of recognition of NTFPs in the national accounting system● Insufficient local accreditation and certification framework for NTFPs and where present, relatively costly

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: WEAKNESSES

Classification	Weaknesses
Policy and institutional barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="458 299 2267 371">● Inadequate skills/capacity and advisory services on NTFPs<li data-bbox="458 385 2216 556">● Lack of a joint platform for knowledge management and information sharing<li data-bbox="458 571 2420 656">● Limited capacity, knowledge, and policy support to institutions<li data-bbox="458 671 2293 842">● Inadequate access to sustainable credit facilities for NTFPs investment by commodity groups and potential investors<li data-bbox="458 856 2471 1028">● Insufficient resources for the implementation of NTFPs programs as well as robust monitoring systems.<li data-bbox="458 1042 2446 1313">● The link between the economic benefits of NTFPs and their resource base (including local availability and sustainability) and sources are poorly understood.

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: OPPORTUNITIES

- UN Decade for Ecosystem restoration: a window for the sustainable development of NTFPs
- Existence of global funding instruments such as UNFCCC's Special Climate Change Fund, GCF and the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol, Global Environment Facility (GEF)'s Least Developed Countries Fund, REDD+ and other facilities linked to the UNCCD
- Private-public partnerships providing blended finance and performance-based financing opportunities
- Existence of potential domestic and external markets

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: THREATS

- Rapid population growth
- Changing livelihood and consumption patterns
- Global climate change
- Deforestation and land degradation
- Bureaucratic process and procedures in accessing donor funding
- Global crises such as conflicts and pandemics could shift funding priorities
- Deteriorating ecological conditions

CONCLUSIONS

- Whereas sixteen (16) potential NTFPs have been identified, it is recognized that only a few of these such as gums, gum resins, indigenous fruits, medicinal plants, honey and bee products, wood fuel, ecotourism, seed oil, essential oils, African indigenous vegetables, forage (foliage & grass), dyes and tannins, are being exploited to some degree in a commercial sense.
- It is also recognized that sustainable commercialization of NTFPs has a great potential for the creation of employment, contributing to improved benefit-sharing, improved conservation of biodiversity, reduced land degradation, and increased households' incomes thus leading to reduced vulnerability of local communities.

CONCLUSIONS

- However, the commercialization of NTFPs in the country is impeded by several factors that can be classified as production, marketing, policy, and institutional barriers.
- Sustainable commercialization of these products in the country therefore requires revision and domestication of laws and policies, public-private partnerships, research, innovation, value addition, technology development and transfer, capacity building, synergies, and complementarities and development of a national strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the short term, a national strategy would be critical in streamlining the NTFPs sub-sector.
2. Continuous engagement of Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development on exports, trade negotiations, commodity exchange and standardization of products through Kenya Bureau of standards
3. Supportive policy and institution frameworks should be established at the national level, and cascaded to the counties for regulating commercialization of NTFPs

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Continuous awareness creation to and capacity building of various stakeholders
5. Continuous coaching, mentoring, and market linkages for various groups/associations
6. Value addition and branding and certification of NTFPs for specialized markets
7. Establishment of plantations for commercial production of NTFPs

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THANKS

