

# Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in African Dry Forests : from local action to national forest policy reforms

## Introduction

The dry forests of Africa are home to almost 235 million rural people and the forests cover over 43% of the land surface. Forest-based economic activities, such as making charcoal and selling forest products often contribute to over 25% of rural household income and reduce the impacts of droughts and lean times. The fact that so many people depend on the dry forests make them unique and important. Non-timber forest products can offer options for improving people's livelihoods while at the same time conserving the forest resources. Sustainable management of the dry forests can thus contribute to meeting the UN Millennium Developmental Goals regarding poverty alleviation and protection of the environment. This makes dry forests a key resource in the convergence of interest between development and conservation objectives.

New developments in Africa such as NEPAD are creating new and better opportunities for poor rural people to engage in and benefit from forest based enterprises and markets. The increasing rates of urbanization are creating markets for traditional forest products. Global demand for forest products such as organic honey and Body-Shop type natural products are increasing (estimated at over US\$11 billion). Fair trade systems are some of the positive trends that can stimulate forest enterprises and benefit rural producers.





It is against this background that the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), in partnership with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), is working together in developing forest-based enterprises in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Zambia. The overall objective of the initiative, for a three year period (2006-2009), is to improve incomes for the rural poor through strengthening policy, institutional, technical and economic incentives for sustainable forest management.

## Specific objectives

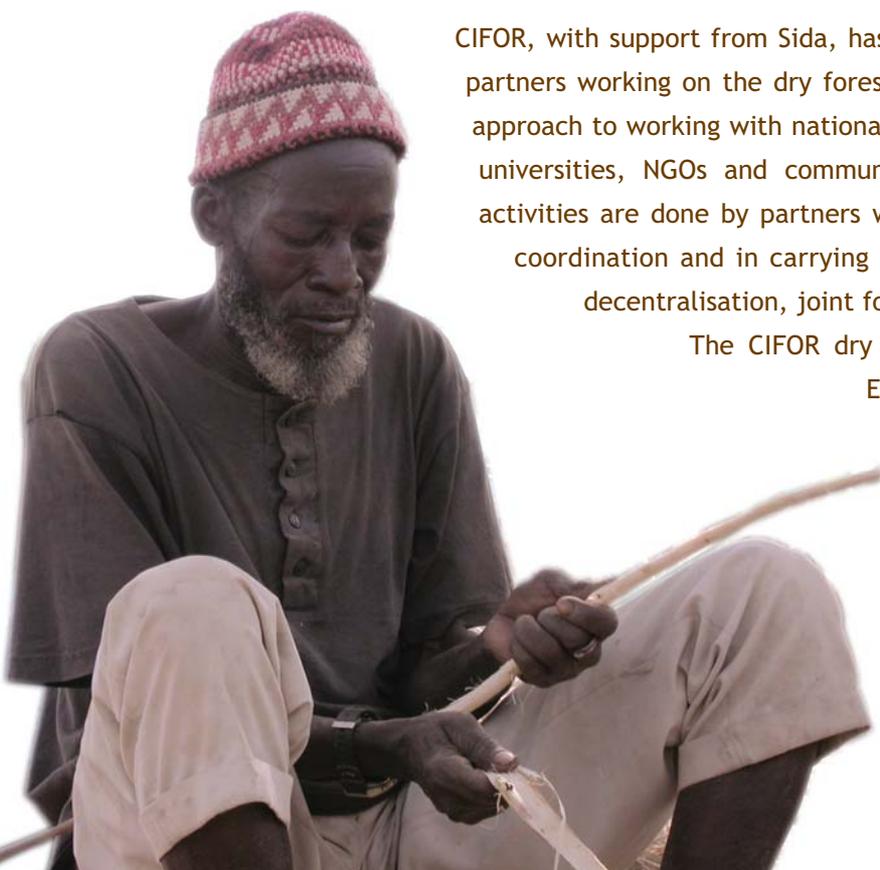
- Adoption of improved forest management and marketing practices for selected forest products that benefit the poor in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Zambia ;
- Enhanced forest benefit distribution mechanisms and collective action within targeted communities in the three countries ;
- Changed perception and processes for policy makers on the importance of dry forests in rural livelihoods.



## Who we are

CIFOR, with support from Sida, has established a team of researchers and partners working on the dry forests of Africa. CIFOR uses a collaborative approach to working with national research institutes, forest departments, universities, NGOs and communities. Much of the development type activities are done by partners while CIFOR plays a lead role in overall coordination and in carrying out the action research components on decentralisation, joint forest management and collective action.

The CIFOR dry forest team is based in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Zambia and the contact details are listed at the end of this flyer.





## The approach

The initiative focuses on forest enterprise development, and hence, the approach involves targeting communities directly involved in the production and marketing of specific forest products as follows :

- Gum Arabic in the Sahelian part of Burkina Faso and shea nuts in the southern parts of the country ;
- Gums and resins in the dry forests of north-western Ethiopia ;
- Honey and bees wax in the North-Western and the Copperbelt provinces in Zambia.

The action-research involves tracking the production systems, processing technologies, marketing strategies, local and international markets, pricing, policy and institutional arrangements over the resources. Data collected will be used in guiding development options and will also be used to understand how forest-based enterprise can be promoted and how they can be linked to sustainable forest management.

A similar methodological approach is applied across the three countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Zambia) to provide a basis for a comparative analysis of how to link local action on forest management to policy and ultimately to improved livelihoods.



## Expected outputs

The action-research will assist policy makers and rural people to take advantage of the emerging opportunities offered by forest-based enterprises. The research will provide evidence for improved livelihoods from engaging forest product businesses, support positive policy



reforms, catalyze new thinking on the policy agenda, and draw lessons from previous work on forest products. The initiative will help rural communities in the three countries learn new practices, identify new markets, price their products and will help in setting up institutional mechanisms (e.g. joint forest management) around a specific forest product, help poor families increase access to forest resources and incomes as well as help the farmers manage the resources sustainably. The research will produce new paradigms, tools and methodologies that improve our understanding of forest based enterprises, livelihood options and sustainable forest management at the global level. ■



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For more information please visit :

[www.cifor.cgiar.org/dryforest](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/dryforest)

