





IMPROVED LOCAL COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS THROUGH INCREASED INCOME FROM NON-TIMBER FORESTS PRODUCTS (NTFP): MODELING SCALABLE COMMUNITY-BASED ENTERPRISES IN ASIA

 2022 - 2026

 4,000,000 USD

 **Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam**

NTFPs have been sources of food, fodder, fuel, and other products that can be harvested in otherwise difficult times and consumed at home or sold. The FAO report on the World's Forest 2022 estimates that 3.5-5.8 billion people use NTFPs for their own use or to support livelihood. The report also mentioned that some NTFPs are driving multimillion and even multibillion-dollar industries associated with cosmetics, food, and health and well-being. NTFPs have high potential to smooth income across seasons and years, thereby mitigating the risk that the poor will sink deeper into poverty and the non-poor will become impoverished.

In this context, the 5th Session Assembly of AFoCO 2021 approved the regional project entitled "Improved local community livelihoods through increased benefits from non-timber forests products (NTFP): Modeling scalable community-based enterprises in Asia". This project is the first regional initiative in which all member countries of AFoCO participate.

The NTFP Project is a pivotal initiative aimed at harnessing the untapped potential of Non-Timber Forest Products in select countries. NTFPs encompass a diverse array of natural resources, such as medicinal plants, wild edibles, and handicraft materials, often sourced from forests.

These resources hold immense ecological and socio-economic value, benefiting both local communities and ecosystems.

Despite their significance, the sustainable utilization and management of NTFPs face multifaceted challenges, including limited knowledge, inadequate infrastructure, and market access constraints. The NTFP Project emerges as a response to these issues, driven by the conviction that empowering communities to engage in Community-Based Natural Enterprise (CBNE) initiatives can promote environmental conservation and enhance livelihoods.

The primary objective of the NTFP Project is to promote the development and modeling of Community-Based NTFP Enterprises (CBNE) within participating countries. This initiative seeks to empower local communities to sustainably manage NTFPs, thereby fostering income growth while preserving critical ecosystems. Specific objectives include:

- To improve livelihoods through the development of country-specific, scalable, and replicable CBNE Models and Building and Human Capital.
- To improve income benefit capture from NTFPs for communities through research, value-addition, standards and certification, and market access.
- To balance NTFP utilization and sustainable resource management, through research and piloting of NTFP Sustainable Harvesting Protocols, Resource Enhancement Methods
- To institutionalize CBNE development extension support by capacity-building government support providers and the creation and exchange of knowledge on CBNE/NTFP

Perceived Project Impacts

Outcome Level

The project improves local community livelihoods by increasing the income benefits derived from NTFPs through CBNE modeling, capacity building, value-addition, market linking, and formulation and enhancement of CBNE-enabling policies and practice at regional and sub-regional levels, contributing to food security and poverty alleviation in rural areas. It incentivizes communities' practice and participation in SRM and SFM and equips communities to adapt to climate change through diversified income sources, use and trade of climate-adaptive products, and savings opportunities. The project also strengthens the capacity of partner Forest Departments and the AFoCO to extend support to CBNE livelihoods development and provide an opportunity to Build-Back Better by finding new ways to promote SFM and community livelihoods in the new normal. Together, the forestry sector and communities contribute to the "One Health" Strategy by keeping forests intact and raising awareness of the link between forests and health through NTFP-based products.

Output Level

By strengthening CBNE and SRM through the Business and SRM Plan, building their capacity and knowledge, and promoting the adoption of CBNE-enabling policies, local communities will advance in NTFP value chains and have increased income. Increased engagement with markets and compliance with product standards as well as developing new value-added products from NTFPs, the CBNEs will increase net profits from products as well as open up new markets, and revitalize the sector. The Regional and Country NTFP and CBNE Road Maps, the Pilot CBNE Incubator and Marketing Center with its engaged partners and stakeholders, CBNE Development Courses and NTFP Information Hub and the Knowledge Products, are designed to institutionalize support services that will ensure continued development of the sector even beyond the project and to contribute towards an enabling environment for CBNEs.

Activity Level

Capacity building through transformative learning methodologies, action research, and pilot projects aims for a longer-lasting impact on the participants' knowledge and skills. Collaborative projects, Knowledge Workshops, and Exchanges contribute to building capacities and creating stronger regional and institutional connections. These activities also result in improved NTFP products and SRM practices, leading to increased incomes for communities and better resource management.



AFoCO is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization that is committed to strengthening forest cooperation and taking concrete actions to promote sustainable forest management and address the impacts of climate change.

