



TRAINING WORKSHOP

ON

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF STAKEHOLDERS IN AFRICAN FORESTRY
ON BUSINESS ENTERPRISES ON GUMS AND RESIN AND OTHER NON-
TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS VALUE CHAINS IN SELECTED AFRICAN
COUNTRIES

CONCEPT NOTE

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1.0 BACKGROUND

Forests and trees provide goods and services that are key assets for reducing vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The forest contributions to climate change adaptation are critically important in African dryland ecosystems that face many climate-related challenges, including recurrent drought, erratic and scanty rainfall patterns which negatively affect livelihood options of dependent communities. In fact, dryland communities are characterized as the poorest and most vulnerable of the continent, frequently exposed to conflicts over limited resources as well as household food insecurity. It is therefore prudent that alternative livelihoods options, for example, through diversification, should be promoted as coping strategies to improve the resilience of these climate sensitive populations. To this end sustainable exploitation and trade in non-timber forest products have been widely documented for their contribution to livelihoods of local communities.

Dry forests are endowed with a rich diversity of woody species, many of which are known to produce a variety of non-timber forest products such as commercial gums and resins. As documented for many NTFPs, the exploitation and trade in gums and resins has strongly emerged as an alternative livelihood support and climate-resilient strategy for African dryland communities. Moreover, gums and resins products are traded locally and are also part of cross-border trade, thus providing many socioeconomic, cultural, and medicinal values, in addition to important environmental functions of the trees. The products are also traded globally. However, in many African countries, the production of gums and resins has been assessed to be far below their effective potential. The low performing value chain is attributed to weak organizational structures and inadequate capacities for processing and marketing the gums, and resins and therefore low profit margins for the producers. Consequently, producers of gums and resins have little economic incentive to manage dry forests responsibly due to inconsistent low price they receive as compared to other actors in the value chain. Underdeveloped markets and value chains and lack of financial capital and technical skills are key constraints facing the gums and resins sector. Preliminary studies on gums and resins value chains in selected countries highlight the active role of women and youth as the main producing actors.

In their effort to strengthen the capacity for production and trade in gums and resins in Africa , by mainly women, youth, and vulnerable communities living in drylands areas more sensitive to climate change, the African Forest Forum (AFF) in collaboration with the Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa (NGARA) assessed the training needs of the value chain actors in the sector in four countries namely, Kenya, Sudan, Niger and Burkina Faso. One of the key findings from the studies is very weak capacity of the actors, more specifically in value addition, entrepreneurial skills, and business management. In order to address some of these challenges, AFF has been engaged, since 2021, in building the capacities and skills of many African forestry stakeholders, including some involved in gums and resins and other NTFPs value chains, for development of bankable projects that could facilitate access to required resources for sustainable and profitable businesses.

However, for these resources to be efficiently used and contribute to the development of the sector in these selected countries, that is Kenya, Tanzania, Niger and Burkina Faso, there is a need to strengthen the existing small and relatively weak capacity of actors in the value chains of key NTFPs in those countries, and including natural gums and resins, on entrepreneurship, business and community-based organizations management. And this is what AFF and NGARA intend to do in these countries, and later expand this effort to other countries as an important component of AFF's capacity building program for the development of Africa's forestry sector.

2.0 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOP

The African Forest Forum is implementing a project on "*African Forests, People and Climate Change*" that seeks to create capacities of stakeholders to strengthen the role of Africa's forests and trees to adapt to climate change and mitigate its adverse effects in various landscapes in ways that will enhance livelihoods, sustain biodiversity, and improve the quality of the environment. In its plan of work for 2022, the project has planned a to organise training workshops in **Kenya, Tanzania, Niger and Burkina Faso** that are expected, to among other things, to facilitate the strengthening, and possibly establishment and operationalization, of organized bodies or entities whose primary business is in gums and resins and other key NTFPs in these five countries.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOP

The overall objective of the training workshops is to impart knowledge and skills to actors in the value chains on various issues, including business management, value addition, quality control, marketing, and trade. Specially, the workshop participants will acquire necessary skills for managing successful businesses by gaining knowledge in the following aspects:

- a) Development of business ideas and plans
- b) Business management including:
 - managing resources and sustainable development
 - accounting and finance
 - managing technology and innovation
- c) Product quality control
- d) Marketing and trade
- e) Corporate responsibility, ethics, and accountability.

4.0 EXPECTED OUTPUTS

By the end of the workshop, actors shall have strengthened their knowledge and capacities on the following, among others:

- The concept and practices of business planning and management;
- Product quality control;
- Marketing and trade;
- Corporate responsibility, ethics, and accountability.

5.0 TRAINING WORKSHOP APPROACH AND PARTICIPANTS

The workshop in the respective countries shall be held over a duration of 3 days and is expected to convene actors selected from the public and private sectors.