



Central African Regional Program
for the Environment

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Abstract

SOS Fund number - # 6b.094

Proposal Title: *State-Of-The-Knowledge Studies Of
Tabernanthe iboga Baillon, Prunus
africana (Hook.f.) Kalkman, Gnetum
africanum Welw. and G. buchholzianum*

Start date: 3/1/99
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The Congo Basin area represents one of largest humid forest zone in tropical Africa. It has an enormous variety of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) which form an integral part of the rural economy and contribute to all aspects of rural life providing food, building material, medicine, craft material and other household items. However, there is a great variation within and between communities in the extent to which NWFPs are used. This is partly due to the fact that the exact magnitude of resource extraction depends on the floristic composition of the forest, the nature and intensity of harvesting, and the particular species under exploitation.

As a result, many of these economically useful species have become increasingly endangered by significant over-harvesting of wild populations, not only for subsistence use but also for the supply of well-developed complex markets, both rural, urban, regional and international. Attempts to address the problems of unsustainable collection of forest products by conservation and development agencies have traditionally been thwarted by a basic lack of technical knowledge based on biological, ethnobotanical and silvicultural information.

The research will mainly focus on three economically useful NWFPs found in the Congo Basin area identified by CARE as high priorities for further research. They are: *Tabernanthe iboga, Prunus africana, and Gnetum spp.*

The main objective of the research is to prepare a detailed state-of-knowledge report on the above taxa. This report will make a significant contribution to broader CARPE activities in the region and will enable CARPE to develop a strategic plan to promote the sustainable use of these taxa. With respect to developing techniques for monitoring, harvesting, marketing, propagation, cultivation and domestication of these species, the results of this research will be used as base line information for any future work.