



Central African Regional Program
for the Environment

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Abstract

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The meaningful development of rattan in Africa is hindered by available basic research and because of this, despite the intentions of many conservation and development agencies, the contribution of rattan to the mitigation of deforestation is currently minimal. However, a great deal of research and development of the rattan resources has been undertaken in SE Asia, particularly Malaysia, which has led to better forest management, sustainable harvesting techniques, agroforestry-based cultivation systems and the valorisation of the finished products through improved handling and processing techniques. The latter, in particular, has led to greater, and more equitable revenue generation from finished rattan products, particularly amongst forest-based communities and urban artisan co-operatives.

The purpose of this proposal is to take stock of the situation in SE Asia, learning from the development of rattan in the region and to avoid “re-inventing the wheel” in terms of the development of the rattan resource in Africa proposed by many government and non-government organisations. This will entail visiting and liaising with a number of the key institutions in Malaysia concerned with rattan research to share experiences and to build upon their considerable experience; transferring relevant experience and appropriate technology for the African situation. The key rattan research institutions currently active in Africa, notably the African Rattan Research Programme and the Limbe Botanic Garden, will be represented on this study tour.

Furthermore, during the field visit to SE Asia, it is intended to identify a suitable person who will be able to visit Cameroon to teach selected rattan artisans improved harvesting, handling and processing methods to improve the general quality of the finished rattan products. This training will take place in a workshop setting and will take place at the Limbe Botanic Garden. Through the identification of suitable candidates in Cameroon, these techniques will then become available to a wider target group once the artisans resume work in their respective markets and co-operatives. This will enable market-led product valorisation and a more meaningful development of the rattan resource in Africa. This fulfils Specific Action #3 of the Market-Economic Priority Actions of the CARPE NWFP Strategy and is a marvellous example of South to South co-operation as suggested as “essential” by the 1992 Convention on



Biodiversity.

A number of institutions have expressed interest in sending representatives to this workshop. ~~The costs of any additional participants will be covered by individual~~ sponsoring institutions.