



ENHANCING COMMUNITY-BASED MANAGEMENT OF DRYLAND FORESTS IN THE GAMBIA

One of the major environmental problems faced by the Gambia is the degradation and destruction of its forests, mainly the dryland forests in the northern part of the country. The underlying driver is the increasing population pressure and lack of adequate socio-economic/livelihood opportunities. Dryland forests in the country play a pivotal role in halting desertification. Although the forest sector in the Gambia is reported to contribute to about only 1.2 percent of the national gross domestic product (GDP), from a socio-economic perspective, it holds great significance to rural livelihoods. Dryland forest ecosystems provide supporting, regulating and provisioning services. The regulating and supporting services are significant in a larger context, agricultural and livestock production account for nearly 30 percent of GDP and employ more than 70 percent of the labour force. Strong and healthy ecosystem services are therefore important for continued progress in sustainable agricultural and livestock production in the country. Although several initiatives/programmes have been implemented to address this situation, there are still barriers to dealing with the issue effectively. The objective of this project was to reduce forest degradation in the northern part of the country through the strengthening and expansion of community-forestry and the implementation of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) practices.



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WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

A National Forestry Strategy was developed and the National Forestry Action Plan was reviewed and updated. Sustainability at the community-based forest enterprise development level was ensured through local-level skill transfers, such as training forest enterprise interest groups on the construction of beehives and general apiary management, as well as on the long-term nature of community forestry (CF) tenure transfer. The project also contributed to good practices by creating regional Sustainable Land Management (SLM) fora, and organizing contacts for collaboration fairs to link forest enterprise groups with service providers, including microfinance institutions. In addition, community-based forest enterprises were strengthened through value chain approaches, turning them into market-oriented businesses. The project facilitated conflict resolution through consensual negotiation with the support of local authorities. Local natural resources management conventions were also developed to promote sustainable grazing and management of natural resources, and to reduce tension between livestock owners and crop farmers, as well as transhumance herders.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget
USD 3 066 347

Duration
October 2016-December 2022

Resource Partner
Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Partners
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources (MECCNAR), Department of Forestry (DoF), National Environment Agency (NEA), Natural Resources Consulting (NACO), National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Agency for Development of Women and Children (ADWAC)

Beneficiaries
Local communities, Community Forest and Joint Forest Park Management (JFPM) committees, crop and livestock farmers in the four target regions

IMPACT

The project contributed to enhancing livelihoods through forest enterprise development on honey production and sale, and skills development for the processing and transformation of beeswax into other products, to generate income. These activities also help reduce pressure on the local forest from both domestic and commercial fuelwood and timber harvesting for income. The project contributed to protecting most of the community forests and forest parks under joint management from forest fires and excessive grazing, leading to improvements in forest stocking and density.



ACTIVITIES

- Five regional multistakeholder SLM fora of 100 members created in five regions to be responsible for coordination and monitoring of agriculture and natural resources projects and programmes; and trained on forest governance and participatory forest management.
- 40 community forests at start-up phase, covering an area of 2 014.27 ha, advanced to Preliminary Community Forest Management Agreement (PCFMA) phase and 43 community forests at PCFMA phase, covering an area of 4 629.9 ha, advanced to final Community Forest Management Agreement (CFMA) or ownership phase.
- 81 forest management plans developed for forests at PCFMA and CFMA levels, as well as forest parks under joint management.
- 600 stakeholders trained on improved dryland forest management practices to further consolidate and expand CF programme.
- 20 community-based forest enterprises established (18 on beekeeping, two on seedling production), and 625 beehives distributed to honey enterprise groups for honey production.
- 4 000 metallic improved cook stoves fabricated and distributed to 2 000 households in project intervention regions, to reduce use of fuelwood from forests.
- Five central forest nurseries rehabilitated and provided with multipurpose centres and facilities to increase production of good quality seedlings for forest restoration agroforestry activities.
- Enrichment plantings conducted on 281.9 ha of degraded forests, and agroforestry practices introduced to farming systems, covering an area of 476.9 ha.



Project Title

Community-Based Sustainable Dryland Forest Management

Project Code

FAO: GCP/GAM/031/GFF
Donor: 5406

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