



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# How can we conserve and sustainably manage forest foods?

## Lessons from recent FAO evaluations

Recent evaluations of FAO projects in the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the **Gambia** and **Mozambique** highlight the persistent threats to forests and their ecosystem services, and the importance of community involvement in their sustainable management.

**Community involvement in sustainable forest management is supported by:**



### Providing secure tenure and clear regulations

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the *Community Management of the Miombo Forests in South-East Katanga* project helped **20 communities gain legal rights to their traditional forest lands** and to develop simple management plans for their forest, plant trees and practice conservation agriculture. The evaluation found that the community forestry model developed by the project is effective in improving sustainable forest management and climate change adaptation, and recommends its expansion where legal frameworks allow. [Read more here.](#)



### Recognizing and balancing different priorities

In **Mozambique**, the project *FAO's Technical and Strategic Support to the Implementation of Mozambique's Forest Investment Project* promotes integrated landscape planning through **forest management units, which coordinate plans for timber, non-timber products and ecosystem services**. The evaluation found substantial progress towards sustainable forest management but called for greater community engagement and a stronger gender strategy to ensure success. [Read more here.](#)



### Building capacity and providing sustainable management tools

In the **Gambia**, the *Community-based Sustainable Dryland Forest Management* project **trained 21 community forest committees and 18 Joint Forest Park Management committees in dryland forest management**. This training strengthened local knowledge and skills, ensuring that after the project ended, **community members felt confident in undertaking forest management practices such as fire management**. The evaluation recommended making capacity-building a core part of all future community-based forest management projects in the Gambia. [Read more here.](#)



### Understanding forest product value chains

In the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**, the *Sustainable Forest Lands Management and Conservation under an Ecosocial Approach* project **analysed forest product value chains** to assess market demand and economic potential. These insights helped community members develop sustainable business models and **led to the creation of the Tukupu Direct Communal Social Property Company, the country's first Indigenous forestry company**. The evaluation highlighted the national importance of the project for commercial forestry, biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest use and the participation of Indigenous Peoples. [Read more here.](#)

Explore more lessons from FAO  
forest-related projects on the [FAO  
Office of Evaluation website](#)

Some rights reserved. This work is available under a [CC BY 4.0 licence](#).

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

© FAO, 2025  
CD4846EN/1/03.25