

MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

ASNAPP/ICCO ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS
PROJECT, ASUNAFO NORTH AND SOUTH
DISTRICTS

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List of Acronyms

ASNAPP	-	Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products
FSD	-	Forestry Services Division
GACP	-	Good Agricultural and Collection Practices
GAP	-	Good Agricultural Practices
GEPC	-	Ghana Exports Promotion Council
GCP	-	Good Collection Practices
GHCP	-	Good Harvesting and Collection Practices
GOP	-	Grains of Paradise
GPHP	-	Good Post Harvest Practices
ICCO	-	Inter-Church Organization for Development Cooperation
KNUST	-	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MLNR	-	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MOFA	-	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
NTFP	-	Non-Timber Forest Product
NTFPP	-	Non-Timber Forest Plant Product
REP	-	Rural Enterprise Project
RUDEYA	-	Rural Development and Youth Association

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This midterm evaluation report of the ICCO-funded and ASNAPP-implemented alternative livelihoods project for Asunafo North and South districts in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana was commissioned by ASNAPP to examine the concept, design, implementation modalities, effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability and also assess project management arrangements during its first two years of implementation (ended April 2011).

In conducting this evaluation project documents, progress reports and relevant policy documents on the NTFP sector were reviewed. The consultant visited selected communities and farms in the project area to interact with beneficiaries, interacted with project partners; support service providers, governmental institutions and other development organizations in Accra, Kumasi and Goaso (see Appendix 2).

Apart from the project concept and design being in line with the emerging national policy on the NTFPP sector, strong collaboration with several partners during implementation, application of on-going research results, effective project implementation monitoring, provision of market opportunities for NTFPPs, and ASNAPP's capacity for technical training along the entire NTFPP value chain were major lessons learnt during this 2-year implementation period.

Applying the goal-based model of evaluation on key outputs and outcomes agreed upon for review after year 2 of implementation, management has achieved or even exceeded set targets in some cases. Farmer sensitization and awareness creation, seedling production and distribution, target number of farmers to reach with pilot farms, research and experimentation on selected non-timber forest plants (GOP, Voacanga, Griffonia, Black pepper) and technical capacity building actors along the entire value chain have been very successful.

Based on the positive attributes and the results achieved within the first two years of this alternative livelihood project (concept, design, relevance and sustainability) with the implementation and monitoring arrangements and activities carried out so far, it is recommended that

- the last three years of funding be committed to consolidate the gains of this innovative project
- a beneficiary assessment should be undertaken to confirm and document the gains by farmers (by comparing revenues and income streams generated by farmers who have cultivated the various crops promoted by the project - Voacanga, GOP, Black pepper and Griffonia - with those of non-participating farmers)
- ASNAPP be facilitated to up- and out-scale technical capacity building of all the actors along the entire NTFPP value chain, in line with the emerging national policy on the sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

ASNAPP was commissioned by RUDEYA in the last quarter of 2008, to conduct a market study/value chain analysis on Non Timber Forest Plant Products (NTFPP's) in six RUDEYA-assisted communities to identify those with potential that could be commercialized, describe the activities of the various actors within the supply chain, and identify their major constraints as well as provide appropriate recommendations for successful implementation of natural products livelihood projects for the selected communities in the two districts. Following the successful completion of the study and a validation workshop to present the findings and recommendations of the report to farmers from the selected communities visited during the study as well as key partners, and the resulting indication of overwhelming interest and willingness from farmers to take part in the emerging opportunities, ASNAPP submitted a five-year Alternative Livelihood Project proposal to ICCO who approved funding for the first two years.

Given that the first two years of the project ended in April 2011, the services of a consultant was engaged at the end of May 2011 to assist the project implementer, ASNAPP, and donor, ICCO, assess and evaluate progress made thus far.

1.2 Aim and Scope of Work of the Evaluation

The principal objective of the evaluation is to examine the concept, design, implementation modality, effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability as well as an assessment of project management arrangements. The evaluation will review progress made against stated outputs and outcomes as well as an assessment of the wider external environment (including market trends availability and access to credit, recent rainfall patterns, land availability and utilization, and mining) that is likely to impinge on the institutionalization and sustainability of the project. Based on this assessment, the evaluation will also identify key milestones for the remaining period of the project and make recommendations to guide all relevant stakeholders and development partners.

Specifically, the scope of work of the evaluation (see Appendix 1 - TOR) required of the consultant to:

- Review start-up activities and approaches adopted
- Analyze the appropriateness of the selection of the project area and NTFPPs; project beneficiaries and their organizations and implementing partner organizations as primary and secondary stakeholders in the context of the socio-economic conditions, gender and service delivery mechanism
- Examine whether project resources are efficiently utilized to produce planned results and whether results can be realized within the planned period
- Identify key lessons learnt based on the experiences of project implementation

- Assess and review whether the planning and monitoring mechanism set up is adequate to monitor results
- Review partnership arrangements and collaborations between ASNAPP and partner NGO, RUDEYA; government agencies and service providers Rural Enterprise Project and MOFA; research partner, KNUST; buyers like Starlight and West African Naturals and farmers in the project area
- Review intermediate and future impact of the project on male and female beneficiaries in terms of increase in income, technology transfer, knowledge gained, organization and relations fostered
- Review sustainability plan and make appropriate recommendations
- Review external environment such as market trends, availability and access to credit, recent trends and rainfall patterns, land availability and utilization and mining likely to impact on the sustainability of the project
- Review management arrangements and organization, role of ASNAPP and partners versus the value chain (service delivery mechanism) and beneficiaries/buyers.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 General Approach

Beginning with a comprehensive briefing session by ASNAPP staff on their activities in general and the ICCO- supported Alternative Livelihood Project in the Asunafo North and South Districts in particular on May 27, 2011; a general approach to the assessment was agreed upon between ASNAPP and the consultant. Activities undertaken within this general framework include:

- Review of background documents, project document, progress reports and the policy framework that guides the NTFP sector in the country
- Interaction with project partners including private sector, other development organizations, support service providers and governmental institutions in Accra, Kumasi and Goaso (see Appendix 2)
- Field visits to selected communities and farms in the Asunafo North and South Districts of the Brong-Ahafo region to interact with project beneficiaries and assess the reality on the ground (see Appendix 3)
- Receiving feedback on a draft report and finalizing the report based on comments received from the project implementer and donor.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria, Design, Instrumentation and Analyses

Key aspects of the evaluation that were agreed upon include the four criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability, and the extent to which management arrangements supported the attainment of these criteria. In view of this, a combination of the goal-based and decision-making evaluation models was employed in order to satisfy all the intended outcomes of the evaluation.

Mainly qualitative techniques were employed including close-up detailed observations, interviews, focus group discussions with beneficiaries and other stakeholders, and critical examination of existing plots, farms and project documents.

3. RESULTS / OUTCOME

3.1 Key Findings

3.1.1 Project concept

As the title of this innovative project implies, *alternative livelihoods in natural plant products* lays emphasis on the hitherto neglected potential contribution (in terms of policy initiatives and action) of minor crops, medicinal plants, spices, or natural plant products to rural livelihoods, economic development and biodiversity conservation.

Highlighting the role of NTFPs in the subsistence economy of forest-dwelling communities, Ros –Tonen et al. (1995) note the importance of these forest products in as they contribute substantially to their material well-being, providing food, shelter, medicines, forage and other products. They further observe that besides these, the exploitation of NTFPs contributes to the cash incomes of people engaged in their extraction, processing and trading.

The overall aim of the project is therefore to provide additional incomes and employment to rural communities, reduce poverty levels and ensure ecological stability through addressing key weaknesses or challenges and harnessing emerging opportunities earlier identified in a value chain analysis of Non Timber Forest Plant Products (NTFPPs) in the Asunafo districts of the Brong Ahafo region in particular.

The identified challenges included (i) lack of awareness of the economic potential of NTFPPs (ii) inadequate market information (iii) lack of technical know-how on recommended production and handling practices, and (iv) the non-existence of extension services for the entire sector; while the opportunities were (a) the existence of already known commercial quantities of some products (b) the appreciably rich and fertile soils and good rainfall regime in the area (c) provision of income during the off season of the major crops - cocoa and plantains (d) ASNAPP-secured markets for selected plant products, and (e) availability of high potential, pro-poor crops with very low entry obstacles – Grains of Paradise, Black pepper, and Voacanga.

3.1.2 Project design

This project design is based on various design pillars, with the implementation and monitoring of specific field activities aimed at simultaneously addressing the challenges and developing and exploiting the opportunities identified in a value chain analysis of NTFPPs. The design pillars include:

- (i) the identification and development of a secured market
- (ii) the promotion of a cultivation drive to sustain economic supplies
- (iii) research and technology transfer in a hitherto neglected sector
- (iv) technical capacity building of stakeholders (farmers, collectors, businessmen, extension support service providers) in skills, knowledge and attitudes along the entire value chain.

Secured market identification and development

ASNAPP's project design is based on the market-first, science-based approach to the commercialization and development of initiatives in the natural plant products industry. Consequently, market development continues to serve as the bedrock for NTFPP commercialization activities. Successful agricultural projects are underpinned by sustained market access and presence over time. Access to market and the use of requisite marketing tools is a precondition for the survival of community livelihood projects. It is to sustain this market that ASNAPP continues to facilitate trade between producers and buyers to the point where entrepreneurs emerge from among the local community to play this intermediary role in the market.

Cultivation drive / farm establishment

Another major pillar in this project design, after the secured market, is the cultivation promotion drive which is aimed at addressing product quality and volume inconsistencies in the NTFPP value chain and also reducing pressure of human activities on naturally occurring wild stands. Cultivation of these NTFPPs is also necessary in order to address the emerging requirement for various certifications such as, Fair trade, Eurogap and Organic certification, which cover traceability, pesticide management, and labour protection standards and microorganism limits among others. Cultivation helps provide documentary proof of source which details every activity carried out from planting material selection to the post harvest practices adopted during the production process.

Research and technology transfer

Unlike in cash and food crops, research into the development of NTFPPs largely neglected. With NTFPPs emerging as a promising alternative livelihood option to timber extraction in natural forest management, it has become imperative that more resources are devoted to undertake various research activities to address challenges arising from the domestication and commercialization of NTFPPs thereby ensuring long term sustainability of the forest and livelihoods. The objective of this activity is to improve upon the knowledge base of

communities in terms of propagation and domestication of NTFPPs and improve research which is limiting.

Technical capacity building

Capacity building, one of the other major pillars in the project design, is aimed at building the technical competence of farmers and collectors alike in good agricultural and collection practices, harvesting and post-harvest handling techniques, marketing and systematic commercialization approach to NTFPP development – in order to satisfy product quality which has become increasingly important in today’s global world, with changing consumers’ preference for safe and healthy items.

It is also aimed at building the technical competence of implementing partners to provide extension support to farmers and mentor small scale farmers to increase production and productivity as well as enhancing sustainability of the project. Capacity building is also designed to increase the knowledge and skills of agents and exporters in business management, quality requirements, markets, products and their specifications, and exposure to international markets for selected NTFPPS (Griffonia, Voacanga, Grains of paradise, black pepper and birds’ eye chillies/African Hot pepper).

3.1.3 Project effectiveness

Project effectiveness answers the question “did the activities do what they were supposed to do?” Activities outlined for implementation in both years 1 and 2 under the design pillars described above, in order to achieve the stated objectives of the project are summarised below.

In year one (March 2009 – February 2010), ASNAPP was to partner with RUDEYA to implement the project in six selected communities in the Asunafo North and South Districts of the Brong-Ahafo Region. The activities focused on: (i) the establishment of GOP and Voacanga in compatible cropping systems by farmers (ii) the capacity development of technical officers that were to supervise and manage the project and Actors’ skills and knowledge within the entire value chain (iii) the establishment of nurseries and an experimental farm for seedling supply and learning purposes respectively (iv) the conduct of sensitization workshops on Good Collection and Agricultural Practices and (v) the conduct of NTFPP assessments for possible expansion of the project. In the second year of implementation (March 2010 to April 2011), given that funding was secured for only the first two years and taking into consideration start-up challenges encountered, a decision was rightly taken to intensify activities and interventions in the existing project area and surrounding communities to deepen impact rather than spread resources thin into new districts and regions.

Using the goal-based model, a critical assessment of attainment levels for activities carried out in both years 1 and 2 clearly showed that objectives were mostly achieved, with set targets being exceeded in many cases (see Appendices 4 and 5).

Project effectiveness, which can also be measured in terms of substantive changes in knowledge, attitudes or skills on the part of project clients, was gauged to be very high. For example, beneficiaries in communities visited during fieldwork for this evaluation urged the project to stop the supply of free GOP seedlings in particular so that farmers who had acquired the necessary nursery skills could make some money from the sale of seedlings to prospective farmers who show interest. In focus group discussions in the beneficiary communities, farmers expressed disgust about the former practice of felling useful timber species just to harvest *Griffonia* as a result of learning that the plant can be cultivated and controlled on amenable live stakes.

3.1.4 Project relevance and impact

The relevance of this project stems from the logic in the concept and design and the subsequent implementation arrangements put in place to attain the goals outlined in the project. The project design relies on systematically addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities identified earlier in a value chain analysis of NTFPPs. It is based on a real situation analysis of a hitherto neglected sector, in an area consisting mostly of forest-fringe communities that has ecological advantage in the collection and commercial cultivation of some selected plants and products.

In Ghana, most development organizations involved in the commercialization of NTFPPs have focused their attention on the promotion and domestication of Grasscutter breeding, Snail farming and Honey production, neglecting the potential contribution of minor crops, medicinal plants, spices, or natural products (NTFPPs) to economic development. Even the local Forestry Department, judging from field interactions during this fieldwork, did not reckon with these (NTFPPs) as worthy of any attention.

Though many high value and commercially traded NTFPPs were found to occur in the area, the economic potential remains largely unrealised as many farmers have not recognized the increasing importance of these products to their local livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. Whereas a study conducted by ASNAPP in 2007 in 56 communities in Ghana for example, showed that individual collectors in rural communities received between \$1,200 and \$2,400 per season from the sale of NTFPPs, the communities in the Asunafo districts received less than \$5 per annum.

Information from an earlier baseline survey (ASNAPP, July 2009) indicates that the target group for this project consists of subsistence farming communities where 64 % of the economically active labour force is engaged in one form of agricultural activity or the other, with mixed cropping as the dominant cropping system and Cocoa the major cash crop. Cocoa is harvested from October to February in the following year. In between seasons, farmers do not have any significant source of additional income. Meanwhile, most of the NTFPPs under consideration (*Grains of paradise*, *Voacanga*, *Griffonia*, and *Black pepper*) yield in the off season and can thus, in combination with cocoa, provide farmers with all-year-round income.

3.1.5 Implementation modalities/ management arrangements

Project implementation and management arrangements were centred on three issues: forging strategic partnerships and collaboration with relevant institutions and organizations, formation of a project implementation committee, and project monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic partnerships and collaboration

To effectively carry out the planned field activities in line with project design, ASNAPP formed strategic partnerships and collaboration with several organizations and institutions including GEPC, FSD, RUDEYA, KNUST, REP, MOFA and the Municipal & District Assemblies. These working relationships, with stated roles and responsibilities, did not only facilitate the drawing up of targeted and relevant interventions and approaches but also ensured ease of community entry and acceptance of project by participating communities. It also provided a broad support base for the project and ensured buy-in of all stakeholders resulting in a fairly quick project set up and implementation. It has also ensured that ASNAPP activities are backed by research.

ASNAPP maintained and improved its relations with its partners (RUDEYA, KNUST, REP, MOFA, FSD and the Municipal and District Assembly) in the Asunafo North and South Districts respectively to leverage their skills to support the project expansion as part of mainstreaming the activities to fit into the development agenda of the Municipality and crucially, towards enhancing local capacity to ensure project sustainability.

Project implementation committee

An MOU was signed between ASNAPP and RUDEYA to establish a formal working relationship and also to effectively execute the joint project being funded by ICCO under a 6-member project committee formed by the two collaborating institutions to exercise oversight responsibility over the project. Among the key responsibilities of the two collaborating institutions under the MOU, ASNAPP was to:

- Partner with private companies (buyers) to provide assured markets to suppliers of high quality raw materials
- Provide seeds and other planting materials for nursery establishment
- Provide training and build capacities of farmers and technical officers in good agricultural and collection practices, sustainable harvesting and post harvest handling techniques, quality control and assurance, market analysis
- Develop training manuals, production guides, brochures etc, and
- Develop quality control and assurance protocols; while RUDEYA was to:
 - Take the lead on sensitization and awareness creation and setting up of appointments with Communities
 - Lead community mobilization, farmer identification and selection
 - Assist with farm selection, preparation and establishment and mobilization of wild harvested produce

- Assist with project monitoring and training of farmers, and
- Transfer skills in NTFP facilitation and promotion.

Monitoring and evaluation

ASNAPP employed two field assistants to provide assistance to the Technical Officer to ensure a well managed monitoring activity with the increased number of communities and farmers. The Project Officer together with the field assistants supervised and monitored the performance of the seedlings supplied to farmers, provided extension support, served as a hub for market information and coordinated among the beneficiaries and technical experts. Experts from KNUST and the project committee members provided additional technical support to farmers. The Project Officer gathered monthly data on planting date, the status of the farm, presence of pests and diseases, effect of water stress and plant canopy. Comments, challenges and observations by farmers were also noted and addressed. Lessons learnt from year 1 greatly informed implementation in year 2. The project team re-strategized particularly in the areas of choice of planting material, timing of seedling production, distribution scheduling, timely technical support and contact time with participating beneficiaries.

3.1.6 Project sustainability and exit strategies

ASNAPP has developed strong pillars of sustainability for the project which can be traced to several key areas, the most important being *an assured market for the NTFPPs*. Many projects have collapsed because farmers have become worse off after investing in new or alternative livelihood endeavours mainly due to poor market access. Other sustainability pillars, as already pointed out in the project design include *promotion of cultivation of selected non-timber forest plants; research, technology development and transfer; technical capacity building of actors along the value chain; and finally, the implementation arrangements put in place through partnerships and collaboration*.

Secured market development

ASNAPP continuously develops the initially assured market by using two approaches or models pursued simultaneously – nurturing individual community entrepreneurs (champions) and fostering registered farmer cooperatives (cooperatives) – to drive the participating communities to independency and sustainable income from the NTFPPs. Evidence from GEPC (Appendix 6) confirms increasing export volumes and actors in the NTFP sector. Production of high quality NTFPPs to meet growing market specifications requires the technical capacity building of growers and collectors in good agricultural and collection practices, harvesting and post-harvest handling techniques, marketing and a systematic commercialization approach to NTFPP development. ASNAPP is known as an NGO in Ghana and beyond for this hallmark.

Implementation arrangements – strategic partnerships and sustainable collaboration

A second pillar of sustainability and exit strategy adopted by ASNAPP in its implementation arrangements for this project is the strategic partnerships and collaboration with relevant

organizations including a local NGO with established community presence (RUDEYA), local public institutions with agents on the ground for agricultural extension and business development (MOFA and REP respectively) as well as a lead research institution (KNUST).

Systematic technical capacity building of actors along the value chain

The third pillar on which a successful exit strategy can be relied upon is the systematic technical capacity building approach adopted by ASNAPP for its primary stakeholders - beneficiary farmers and forest-fringe inhabitants and implementation partners. Capacity building, as a critical tool for sustained market access, was employed throughout the supply/value chain from production and or collection to markets. With repeated trainings, it is expected that compliance to quality standards will be enhanced and ultimately product quality improved. Complying farmers are also, over time, expected to receive premium prices for their goods.

Other external environmental issues likely to affect sustainability of the project

Risks associated with the cultivation and or wild-collection of NTFPPs including availability and access to credit, recent rainfall patterns, land availability and utilization, and mining will not be different from the same affecting agricultural production in general. In particular, the formation of farmer cooperatives and research on the agronomy and integration of non-timber forest plants into existing farming systems by ASNAPP will mitigate these risks. Beneficiaries have hailed the cultivation of Griffonia (often collected from the wild by felling large trees) as an appropriate technology for conservation and a strong instrument for climate change adaptation.

3.2 Lessons Learnt

Project concept and design and national policy

ASNAPP's ICCO supported alternative livelihoods in natural plant products project in the Asunafo North and South Districts is in line with the strategic direction in the emerging Ghana Forest and Wildlife Policy (MLNR, 2011) to *manage and develop commercial NTFPPs including bamboo, on both on- and-off-reserved forest areas in all ecosystems within sustainable limits*. Indeed, the project concept, design and implementation preceded the national policy strategy and action on *promotion of resource development programme aimed to developing commercial plantations of viable NTFPPs in suitable areas, backed by research*.

Project implementation monitoring

Planned periodic monitoring and evaluations are critical to the success of any project. They not only provide valuable inputs for assessing progress of work but also help in deciding whether investing in such projects and current approaches employed are worthwhile or that alternative approaches be considered. Monitoring and Evaluation has therefore become a key component of any meaningful project in order to track changes in program performance over time and the project contribution towards the attainment of its objectives and goals that will either lead to a continuation of the project by adopting same approach or a revision of strategies. Effective project implementation monitoring enabled lessons learnt from year 1 greatly to inform implementation in year 2, leading to the project team re-strategizing

particularly in the areas of choice of planting material, timing of seedling production, distribution scheduling, timely technical support and contact time with participating beneficiaries.

Role of research

The role of research in overcoming the challenge with the GOP seedlings cannot be overemphasized. With the research team and intensive work, ASNAPP was able to avert the initial seemingly failing farms from the use of the rhizome. This important success also ensured a more efficient and cheaper way of producing GOP seedlings, stressing the need for research in such project implementation.

Partnerships

The role of collaboration and partnerships, especially with organizations with established community presence (RUDEYA) and local public institutions (MOFA, REP) as well as KNUST, the lead research institution in successful project initiation and continuation is very critical. These working relationships, with stated roles and responsibilities, did not only facilitate the drawing up of targeted and relevant interventions and approaches but also ensured ease of community entry and acceptance of project by participating communities. It also provided a broad support base for the project and ensured buy-in of all stakeholders resulting in a fairly quick project set up and implementation. It has also ensured that ASNAPP activities are backed by research.

Availability of Market Opportunity

The ability of the project to continue to provide marketing avenues, wild collection and marketing of selected NTFPs, has helped enormously in anchoring farmers' interest and exposing them to the commercial benefits to be realized. It has also boosted their confidence and commitment to the project. Records of exports of medicinal plants and seeds (NTFPPs) obtained from GEPC indicate a fluctuating albeit increasing trend. In 2010 alone, a total of 10,904 tonnes of various NTFPPs with a value of US\$ 21,436,712 were exported by twenty-one different exporters (see Appendix 6).

ASNAPP Capacity for Technical Training along the NTFPP Value Chain

ASNAPP has become synonymous with NTFPPs in Ghana to the extent that ministries, departments and organizations that one will naturally expect to give information, technical advice or training along the entire value chain rather refers one to ASNAPP. Some of these (including MLNR, the Forestry Commission, and GEPC) have signed MOUs at one time or the other with ASNAPP to provide education and training for farmers on NTFPPs – from cultivation to marketing. A Senior Planning Officer and Policy Coordinator of the MLNR with the FC summarised the role of ASNAPP in one project (High Forest Biodiversity Conservation Project) as *an excellent mouthpiece*. Similarly, the Executive Director at GEPC confirmed ASNAPP's role in the technical capacity building of growers and collectors in good agricultural and collection practices, harvesting and post-harvest handling techniques, quality control and marketing, and its systematic commercialization approach to NTFPP development in particular as key to a lucrative export market where product quality is of paramount importance.

3.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.3.1 Conclusions

Going by the four agreed upon evaluation criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability, and the extent to which management arrangements supported the attainment of these criteria, it is clear from the results discussed above that the project has been very successful in the first 2 years of implementation.

Applying the goal-based model of evaluation on key outputs and outcomes agreed upon for review after year 2 of implementation, management has achieved or even exceeded set targets in some cases. Farmer sensitization and awareness creation, seedling production and distribution, target number of farmers to reach with pilot farms, research and experimentation and technical capacity building have been very successful.

The following two (2) out of the seven (7) key outputs were not achieved for reasons explained immediately below:

- 12 nurseries established to produce seedlings of GOP, Voacanga and Black pepper for full implementation after year 2
- 4 natural product assessments and sensitization campaigns undertaken in 4 districts in Ghana after year 2

The first was because of lessons learnt during implementation regarding a low spirit of communal ownership among the communities to be able to sustainably manage the proposed community nurseries, and the subsequent strategic decision taken to produce the required seedlings from a central nursery in Goaso.

Similarly, from lessons learnt during implementation, the projected expansion into four (new districts was reversed in favour of consolidating project activities within two relatively homogenous and contiguous (Asutifi North and South) districts to create synergy and critical mass for better impact in accumulating sustainable supplies of NTFPPs for the market.

ASNAPP secured supply contracts and mobilized 5.2MT of wild collected Griffonia, 10.8MT of Voacanga (both within and beyond the project areas), and 2MT of Xylopi for two companies (West African Naturals and Starlight Products) valued at \$102,093 in year 2. ASNAPP also mobilised another 2.4MT of Kombo valued at \$1,600 during the same period. Considering the competitive nature of the NTFPP market, it is unlikely that ASNAPP would have taken delivery of all wild collections in the area. In my candid opinion however, the output on *expected cumulative income of \$175,700 USD to be generated after year 2* from planted NTFPPs was rather too ambitious, especially considering the initial start-up hiccups with unfavourable weather and seedling survival.

As already pointed out about the project design, ASNAPP's sustainability plan for the project has strong pillars, which guarantee the future of business in NTFPPs in the project area. These include *an assured market for the NTFPPs; promotion of cultivation of selected naturally occurring non-timber forest plants; research, technology development and transfer; technical*

capacity building of actors along the value chain; and finally, the implementation arrangements put in place through partnerships and collaboration.

3.3.2 Recommendations

Implementation of full Project Proposal

Based on the positive attributes and the results achieved within the first two years of this alternative livelihood project (concept, design, relevance and sustainability) with the implementation and monitoring arrangements and activities carried out so far, it is recommended that the last three years of funding be committed to consolidate the gains of this innovative project.

Beneficiary Assessment

To assess project impact so far, it is important to undertake a beneficiary assessment of the projected revenues expected to be generated by farmers who have cultivated the various crops (Voacanga, GOP, Black pepper and Griffonia) promoted by the project, and compare their income streams with non-participating farmers. Such assessment should include changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations (KASA changes) of beneficiary and non-participating farmers and or communities from the capacity building activities undertaken by the project. The presence of an earlier baseline survey at the beginning of the project will facilitate the analysis of project impact.

Up- and Out-scaling Capacity Building Activities by ASNAPP

In line with the policy strategies and actions of the emerging Ghana Forestry and Wildlife Policy on the sustainable development of NTFPs, ASNAPP, together with its partners, are well positioned *to developing commercial plantations of viable NTFPs in suitable areas, backed by research* (MLNR,2011), through more vigorous capacity building activities with MOFA extension staff and farmers. Forest-fringe communities who are already benefitting from using NTFPPs should form the building blocks of this recommended action.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Terms of reference – Mid-Term Evaluation of ICCO Supported Alternative Livelihood Project in the Asunafo North and South Districts

INTRODUCTION

Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP) is an international NGO established in 1999 in partnership with several leading universities and the private sector; with the aim to reduce poverty and hunger in rural communities in Africa through sustainable production, harvesting and marketing of African indigenous plant products. ASNAPP adopts a market-driven, science-based commercialization approach that translates market requirements, through research and quality assurance into products and secured orders. ASNAPP provides services and interventions to the industry along the supply chain from production to market. It collaborates with in-country NGOs, research and academic institutions, private and public sector organizations and farmer-groups in rural communities, adopting a participatory and multi-sectorial approach to natural products development, towards economic upliftment of the rural farmer.

In 2009, following the submission of the findings and recommendations of Market/Value Chain Analysis commissioned by ICCO and RUDEYA in the Asunafo North and South districts of Brong-Ahafo, ASNAPP was invited to submit a 5-year proposal aimed at exposing the economic and commercial potential of high value NTFPs in existing project areas of RUDEYA and other partners and to help develop sustainable alternative livelihood projects that will generate income and employment. ASNAPP with its experience and work on NTFPs was to provide the technical expertise and guidance whilst partners were to be responsible for community mobilization and assist with project monitoring.

Though the 5-year proposal was approved, ICCO committed to fund the first two years subject to renewal after a review at the end of year 2. Some key outputs and outcomes agreed were;

1. 12 nurseries established to produce seedlings of GOP, Voacanga and Black Pepper for full plantations after year 2
2. 4 natural product assessments and sensitization campaigns undertaken in 4 districts in Ghana after year 2
3. 450 farmers and 14 technical staff trained in good agricultural practices, business management and post harvest handling after year 2
4. 400 collectors and agents trained in good collection practices, sustainable post harvest handling techniques and quality specifications after year 2
5. 200 farmers from 12 communities (30% women) directly engaged in the production of 71 acres of GOP, 70 acres of Voacanga and 9 acres of Black Pepper after year 2

6. 67 collectors and agents from 12 communities engaged to mobilize and market 8MT of medicinal plants (3MT of Griffonia, 5MT of Kombo) after year 2
7. \$175,700USD expected cumulative income generated after year 2

Regarding sustainability of the project after year 5, the following were agreed;

1. Establish a system that ensures that farmers receive competitive and fair prices for their produce
2. Establish a linkage between the farmer groups and micro-finance institutions to ensure that commercial activities do not depend on grants or donor funds
3. Establish an endowment fund where part of the proceeds accruing from commercial activities undertaken by communities will be ploughed back to support developmental activities and further expansion and exploration of NTFP opportunities

Additionally, ASNAPP is to develop an exit strategy for the five year programme that will indicate how chain facilitation and capacity of chain actors will be sustained and/or completed after year five when donor support ends.

Given that the first two years of the project ends this April, 2011 your services are being contracted to assist both the project implementer, ASNAPP, and donor, ICCO, assess and evaluate progress made thus far.

Aim of the Evaluation:

The principal objective of the evaluation is to examine the concept, design, implementation modality, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability of the Livelihood programme as well as an assessment of the project management arrangements. It should review progress made against stated outputs and outcomes as well as an assessment of the wider external environment (including market trends, availability and access to credit, recent rainfall pattern, land availability and utilization and mining) that is likely to impinge on the institutionalization and sustainability of the project. Based on this assessment, the evaluation should identify key milestones for the remaining period of the project to help better monitor activities. Recommendations should also be made to guide future course of action for all relevant stakeholders and development partners.

Scope of Work:

- Review start-up activities and approaches adopted
- Analyze the appropriateness of the selection of the project area and NTFPs; project beneficiaries and their organizations and implementing partner organizations as primary and secondary stakeholders in the context of the socio-economic conditions, gender and service delivery mechanism

- Examine whether project resources are efficiently utilized to produce planned results and whether results can be realized within the planned period
- Identify key lessons learnt based on the experiences of project implementation
- Assess and review whether the planning and monitoring mechanism set up is adequate to monitor results
- Review partnership arrangements and collaborations between ASNAPP and partner NGO, RUDEYA; government agencies and service providers Rural Enterprise Project and MOFA; research partner, KNUST; buyers like Starlight and West African Naturals and farmers in the project area
- Review intermediate and future impact of the project on male and female beneficiaries in terms of increase in income, technology transfer, knowledge gained, organization and relations fostered
- Review sustainability plan and make appropriate recommendations
- Review external environment such as market trends, availability and access to credit, recent trends and rainfall patterns, land availability and utilization and mining likely to impact on the sustainability of the project.
- Review management arrangements and organization, role of ASNAPP and partners versus the value chain (service delivery mechanism) and beneficiaries/buyers.

Evaluation Criteria:

Key aspects of the evaluation should include;

- Efficiency: results created in relation to the resources invested;
- Effectiveness: the extent to which the planned outputs and outcomes are being achieved;
- Relevance: to what extent the project is addressing problems of high priority, mainly as viewed by the stakeholders;
- Sustainability: community ownership, capacity built along the supply chain (of individuals as well as community organizations/cooperatives) and sustainable income generation.
- Management arrangements: the extent to which management arrangements support the above and in view of sustainability.

Methodology:

- Review the background documents, project document, progress reports etc

- Review the policy framework that guide the NTFP sector in the country
- Interact with project partners including private sector, other development organizations, support service providers and governmental institutions
- Make field visits to selected communities in the Asunafo North and South Districts of the Brong-Ahafo region to assess reality on the ground
- Use structured semi-structured questionnaires and/or focus group discussion to gather relevant data.
- Draft the report and circulate to project implementer and donor
- Finalize the report based on the comments received

(Note: ASNAPP office will provide the required logistical support including working space. It will also appoint a focal point to support the assignment)

Outcome:

The assignment will prepare a comprehensive report evaluating the overall efficiency, effectiveness and concept, design and implementation strategies. The report will contain key findings, recommendations, lessons learnt. The recommendations should include future direction and strategies.

Date of Service:

Your services will be contracted in June 2011 for 15 effective man days.

Appendix 2: Project partners, other development organizations, support service providers and government institutions interacted with during fieldwork (July 2011)

No.	Organization /Institution	Contact person(s)
1.	ASNAPP, Accra	Project team
2.	GEPC- Accra	Mr. Obeng
3.	RUDEYA, Kumasi	Mr. Owusu Asare and Mr. Tiekua Kobia
4.	MLNR –FC, Accra	Mr. Joseph Osiakwan
5.	CFMU –FSD, Kumasi	Mr. Alex Asare
6.	FORIG –Tropenbos, Kumasi	Dr. Nketia
7.	KNUST – Crop and Soil Sciences Department	Prof. C. Quansah, Prof. R. Akromah
8.	MOFA - Asunafo North, Goaso	Mr. Felix Tienaah,
9.	REP - Asunafo North, Goaso	Mr.S.T. Afreh
10.	FSD – Goaso	Mr. Donkor Twenewboah
11.	ASNAPP, Goaso	Prince Manu Yeboah, Larry Amekuse
12.	MLNR-FC Validation Workshop on Ghana Forest and Wildlife Policy	Miklin Hotel, 21 st July 2011. Mr. Joseph Osiakwan

Appendix3: Communities and farmers visited during fieldwork (4th - 6th July, 2011)

ASUNAFO NORTH

Nyamebekyere(Mim)

- 1 Yaw Ntim
- 2 Adwoa Fordjour
- 3 Akua Attaa
- 4 Adoma Boamah
- 5 I. K. Agyapong
- 6 Ama Adutwumwaa
- 7 Asante Frimpong
- 8 Ampofo Twumasi
- 9 Samuel Marfo
- 10 Emmanuel Akomeah
- 11 Enoch Hayford Aseidu
- 12 Thomas Marfo
- 13 Elizabeth Marfo

- 3 Nana Kofi Oduro
- 4 Kwaku Amo
- 5 Charles Freeman Donkor
- 6 Abena Amankwah
- 7 David Amponsah
- 8 Atta Twumasi
- 9 Nana Yaw Tuffour
- 10 Lucy Oduro
- 11 Adwoa Konadu
- 12 Kofi Jones
- 13 Dora Oduro
- 14 Adwoa Fordjour
- 15 Ama Mintaa
- 16 Adwoa Manu
- 17 Comfort Afriyie

Ahantamo

- 1 Nana Kwadwo Antwi
- 2 Yaa Aseiduaa

ASUNAFO SOUTH

Dantano

- 1 Mary Appau
- 2 John Kofi Agyapong
- 3 Simeon Mensah
- 4 Gaysi Nimako
- 5 Akua Gyinae
- 6 Yaw Kumah

Anwiam

- 1 Kwame Mensah
- 2 Nana Kwasi Aye
- 3 Owusu Noah
- 4 Cecilia Mensah

Adwumakase

- 1 Collins Owusu
- 2 George Boakye
- 3 Esther Nyamekyere
- 4 Acheampong Kwame
- 5 Yaw Thomas
- 6 Baah Thomas
- 7 Kofi Kotoka

- 8 Yaw Awuah
- 9 Francis Banahene

Nyamebekyere(San)

- 1 Comfort Manu
- 2 Naomi Owusu
- 3 Abdulai Salifu
- 4 Hannah Acheampong
- 5 Gladys Gharthey
- 6 Larroba Akosua
- 7 Lamisi Duute
- 8 Alhassan Issaka
- 10 Oppanin Asenso
- 11 Adams Iddrisu

Nobekaw

- 1 Prince Boakye Agyemang
- 2 Elizabeth Anokyewaa
- 3 Victoria Alomenu

- 4 Kwadwo Bene
- 5 Raphael Kusi Anto
- 6 Antwi Agyei George
- 7 Mark Kwadwo Appiah

Appendix 4: Expected Outputs versus Achieved Targets for project year 1 (May 2010 to April 2011)

Activity	Expected Output	Achieved/Delivered	Remarks
Farmer sensitization	Sensitize selected farmers in Asunafo districts on the commercial opportunities in the natural products sector.	100 farmers sensitized on the economics and agronomy of Voacanga and GOP as well as the overall project	
Nursery establishment	Establish 6 nurseries for black pepper (4,400seedlings), GOP (120,000 seedlings) and Voacanga (5,000 seedlings) in 6 communities.	One nursery set up at Goaso with 90,000 GOP, 1,500 Voacanga, 5,000 black pepper, and 4,000 Griffonia seedlings	Original idea abandoned because of poorly established community ownership spirit
Experimental farm establishment	Establish an experimental farm for trials and technology transfer	1.5 acre experimental farm at Nyamebekere (Mim) for learning purposes	In collaboration with KNUST
Piloting commercial farms	Train farmers to cultivate Voacanga and GOP Support farmers to establish pilot commercial plantation of Grains of paradise and Voacanga	68 farmers cultivating 31 acres of GOP and 20 acres of Voacanga 82 farms have been established on the selected NTFP's (Black pepper, GOP and Voacanga).	40% female participation targeted
Capacity Building	Build the capacity of 2 RUDEYA and 2 Extension Officers of MOFA to provide technical skills for the communities	4 RUDEYA, 3 MOFA, and 1 Staff trained on the cultivation of the Selected NTFP's and on farm maintenance	Staff of the local FSD were not aware of the project and thus not included in the training
	Sensitize farmers on wild collection of medicinal plants	150 farmers encouraged and trained on sustainable wild harvest	The sensitization will be done just before the commencement of the Griffonia season
	Build capacity of farmers in post-harvest handling techniques	250 farmers trained on sustainable post-harvest handling	Very important as a bad product from Ghana made Voacanga exporters bankrupt in 2009.
	Train farmers on cooperative management and business skills	68 farmers trained on basic book-keeping, costing, budgeting and organizational development	
Farmer Exchange	Organize farmer field days and farmer to farmer exchange	20 farmers participating in exchange programme with 3 field staff	Participants encountered were highly motivated for action
Market development	Initiate market development activities on selected NTFPs	Negotiations begun with buyers of some of the NTFP's through ASNAPP's extensive networks.	Buyers identified for GOP, Voacanga, Black pepper, Ricinodendrum and Griffonia

Appendix 5: Expected Outputs versus Achieved Targets for project year 2 (May 2010 to April 2011)

Activity	Expected Output	Achieved/Delivered	Remarks
Nursery Establishment and Development	6 additional nurseries established propagating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,000 seedlings of Voacanga • 160,000 seedlings of GOP and • 4,000 seedlings of Black pepper 	A nursery annex constructed close to the central nursery at Goaso producing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6,830 Voacanga seedlings • 127,700 GOP seedlings • 3,230 Black pepper seedlings, • 2,770 Griffonia seedlings • 27,500 African Hot Pepper/Bird's Eye Chillies • Propagation trials conducted on Voacanga, GOP and Griffonia 	Lessons learnt from challenges to access to reliable water supply, effective supervision and maintenance of nurseries informed decision to expand the existing nursery; instead of establishing 6 additional nurseries in added-on communities.
NTFP assessment	Conduct assessments and sensitize 2 districts towards commercialization of NTFPs	NTFP assessments conducted in Asutifi and Dormaa Districts in the Brong Ahafo region.	Decision taken to intensify activities in existing region of operation of project. The two districts chosen therefore are in close proximity to the Asunafo districts where the project has established presence. Expansion into Dormaa districts will consolidate gains made in Asunafo, share resources and expertise and provide a centre for mass production of NTFPs
Capacity building for farmers on agronomy, BDS and post-harvest handling	350 farmers sensitized on; Agronomy, BDS and post harvest handling.	334 farmers trained on: Good agricultural practices, marketing requirements and market coordination, cultural practices, harvesting and post-harvest handling, the importance of quality systems to market sustainability, storage, bagging and packaging of NTFPs. Farmers were also trained on basic data capturing, record keeping, costing and crop budgeting	120 existing farmers in phase 1 were also trained on group formation and dynamics
Capacity building for partners and support service providers	10 new technical staff trained to provide technical services to the communities	Capacities of 11 staff (2 RUDEYA, 3 MOFA and 1 Rural Enterprise Project and 5 ASNAPP) built on: Introduction to the selected NTFP's, Technical requirements for the cultivation of GOP, Voacanga and Black pepper at KNUST	
Training for wild collectors and agents of medicinal plants	250 collectors and agents trained on sustainable wild collection of medicinal plants.	295 collectors and agents trained on good collection and post harvest practices for Griffonia and Voacanga.	Griffonia and Voacanga were in high demand during the 2010 harvesting season. Hence the emphasis

Farmer mobilization for farm establishment	132 farmers from 12 beneficiary communities mobilized for farm establishment	A total of 160 farmers (36%) women were identified and selected. Farmers were allowed to express their interest in the type of NTFP to cultivate.	Terms of engagement were signed between ASNAPP and the farmers to establish roles and responsibilities between the two parties.
Support farmers to establish pilot commercial plantation of GOP and Voacanga	Assist 132 farmers cultivating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 acres of GOP • 50 acres Voacanga and • 9 acres of black pepper 	160 farmers are currently engaged in cultivating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 acres of GOP • 68 acres to Voacanga • 8 acres to Black pepper , and • and 6 acres of Griffonia • 3 acres of BEC 	121% of targeted participants (160 farmers) for year 2 achieved. Total land size put under the cultivation of NTFPs also exceeds the set target for year 2 by 51% .
Establish an experimental farm for trials and technology transfer	1 additional experimental farm established	An experimental farm established in Nyamebikyere was expanded to accommodate more replicates and a live genebank for selected NTFPs	
Organize farmer field days and farmer to farmer exchange	30 farmers participating in exchange programme	35 old and new farmers visited some successful farm in Nyamebikyere to share experiences, technical issues and business lessons from the production of GOP.	
Initiate market development activities on selected NTFPs	Buyers identified for Black pepper and contracts signed for Griffonia and Voacanga	Secured supply contracts and mobilized about 5.2MT of wild collected Griffonia, 10.8MT of Voacanga (both within and beyond the project areas), 2MT of Xylophia for two companies (West African Naturals and Starlight Products) valued at \$102,093.	Black pepper activities slowed due to low available volumes and higher domestic market prices; Xylophia had a good supply base and market demand attractive to suppliers.

Appendix 6: Exports of Medicinal Plants and seeds (NTFPPs) 1990 – 2010

Year	Quantity (Tonnes)	Volume (US\$)
1990	-	64,470
1991	-	35,505
1992	-	126,323
1993	-	59,060
1994	-	149,338
1995	-	144,324
1996	601	1,543,060
1997	632	801,609
1998	-	2,098,524
1999	483	751,753
2000	498	467,131
2001	1,291	1,335,724
2002	1,535	3,155,959
2003	-	1,369,747
2004	7,401	3,553
2005	1,111	2,461,984
2006	2,041	2,080,704
2007	4,916	4,066,879
2008	1,544	2,657,088
2009	5,097	8,444,724
2010	10,904	21,436,712

Source: Ghana Exports Promotion Council (GEPC) Accra, Ghana. July 2011

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