COMMERCIALISATION OF NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS IN MEXICO & BOLIVIA: FACTORS INFLUENCING SUCCESS.

Objective:
Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) have been widely promoted as a potential solution to high rates of tropical deforestation, by increasing the value of forest resources to local people.

This project examines why commercialisation of NTFPs does not consistently contribute to poverty alleviation, gender equality and sustainable resource management, by undertaking a comparative analysis of different NTFP case studies.

Opportunities and constraints to commercialisation of NTFPs, and the impacts of NTFP trade on local people, will be analysed by socio-economic research at household and community levels. In addition, market structure and performance will be studied to identify interventions necessary for successful NTFP commercialisation.

Activities:
- Workshops in Mexico and Bolivia to undertake comparative analysis of NTFP case studies, enabling the key constraints to NTFP commercialisation to be identified;
- Collaborative research on socio-economic and cultural factors influencing NTFP commercialisation, and how market structure and function impacts on local communities and forest resources;
- Training and capacity building workshops on developing research methodologies and application of research tools;
- Joint analysis workshop to promote effective sharing of ideas between project partners;

Outputs:
- A decision-support tool (Manual), developed and tested in collaboration with local communities, for successfully developing NTFP resources;
- A decision-support tool (Expert System) for use by decision-makers to evaluate the potential for successful commercialisation of different forest products;
- An information resource (Website) for development of NTFP resources (http://www.unep-wcmc.org/);
- Descriptions of NTFP case studies, and analysis of the factors influencing successful commercialisation of NTFPs, to be disseminated in a series of publications (Workshop and conference proceedings, methodological working papers, and scientific refereed publications);

Collaborators:
The main collaborators on this project are UNEP – World Conservation Monitoring Centre, U.K; The Overseas Development Institute, U.K; Fauna & Flora International, Nicaragua; and 17 case study communities working directly with our in-country research partners: CARE in Bolivia, and Grupo de Estudios Ambientales, Grupo Mesófilo and Methodus Consultora in Mexico.