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“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

Margarine from the Rain Forest — Income Generation through a New Non Timber Forest Product

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Abstract

Allanblackia floribunda is a tree thriving in the rain forests of West Africa. The seeds contain valuable oils which can be used as raw material in margarine production and other food related processes. So far the seeds and the timber are hardly used thus income from the collection of seeds could supplement household income of rural farmers. Alternative sources of income are scarce for them and the limited range of agricultural crops produced make them very dependent from seasonality and marketing agents.

The common procedure for land clearing before the season is still slashing the undergrowth, cutting trees indiscriminately and burning. Introducing a non timber forest product (NTFP) and therefore giving the *Allanblackia* tree a value might open new income possibilities and the potential for increased sustainability through the integration of this tree into existing farming systems.

A public-private-partnership (PPP) between the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the two multinational companies Unilever and Shell support the establishment of a sustainable supply chain for the NTFP *Allanblackia* seeds in Nigeria.

Unilever guarantees the purchase of all seeds delivered at a preset price. GTZ mobilises potential seed collectors and helps them develop to become competent business partners for the Unilever purchasing structure and adhere to social, ecological and quality criteria.

In 2005 an *Allanblackia* tree inventory was carried out in Edo State. In a pilot phase 50 communities were selected in early 2006, potential collectors trained and a purchasing structure established.

Conflicting messages about farm gate prices kept motivation low and only little produce was delivered to the collection points.

For the upcoming 2007 season prices are adjusted and increased by more than 60%. Operations will be extended to 3 more states and more than 300 communities in total. First results will be available by mid 2007.

Keywords: *Allanblackia*, income generation, Nigeria, NTFP, PPP