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## Improving Smallholders’ Access to Good Planting Material - Improving Input Supply Chains: A Baseline Survey

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### Abstract

In Kenya, forest cover has been reduced to about 2 % over the last decades, and forests are still threatened by increased population and climate change. In order to increase resilience against climate change and to conserve the remaining forests, the government of Kenya has set a national goal of 10 % tree cover in their Vision 2030. Tree planting activities are being promoted on smallholder farms, since agroforestry systems are more resilient and sustainable than monoculture systems, as well as reforestation of natural forests. The current system of input supply for tree seeds consists of a range of actors, with no specific coordination of efforts. This situation is typical for eastern and southern Africa.

The purpose of this study was to identify actors in the input supply system of planting materials and to identify the constraints and opportunities for improving tree nurseries and the distribution of quality germplasm to agroforestry systems.

Findings conclude that NGO started group nurseries face many problems rendering them unsuitable as source of germplasm for smallholders in the long run. The NGOs mainly promote indigenous species for forest restoration, with little consideration to farmers needs. There are strong indications that small scale individual nurseries are more efficient in supplying species in demand, therefore representing a vital link in the input supply system. It can also be seen that training efforts of these small scale enterprises results in higher profit.

NGOs are performing an important role in reforestation and preservation. However, it can be recommended that they change their roles as seed providers, of often low quality seeds, to offer technical training and support to small scale nurseries. National seed centres and NGOs should focus on small scale nurseries, provide training programs and establish good quality seed sources of useful exotic and indigenous species. This would make the input supply system more efficient, providing the best quality germplasm to rural farmers. Promotion and value chain interventions for agroforestry products on a larger scale will further improve the value chain from input supply to outputs, such as timber and fruits.

**Keywords:** Agroforestry, input supply system, seed sources, tree-planting