



Bamboo for Crafts and Technology : Kenya

Conserving Taita Hills Forests through bamboo handicrafts and technology

Project description

The initiative aims to provide the market with quality bamboo handicrafts, furniture and other items, as well as alternative construction materials. This supports ongoing forest restoration efforts around Taita Hills Forests and also provides rural households with an alternative fuel.



Business model

The initiative is based on the sustainable management of natural resources. Inspired by growing local demand for alternative timber sources, the initiative focuses on bamboo handicraft production, providing community members with training, alternative livelihoods and a platform for sharing experience.

The business is operated by teams of common interest groups (craft and furniture artisans and the Vidasi Vikapu women's group) alongside partners from the initiative. Products are designed to offer green solutions and will be marketed through local cooperatives.



Scaling up activities in 2012

- Set up two bamboo nurseries to ensure a sustainable supply of production materials
- Improve planting and maintenance skills for bamboo nurseries
- Train 50 young people and 100 woman artisans in the production of bamboo handicrafts and furniture
- Form partnerships with local businesses to create a marketing supply chain, ensuring the products greater market access

Immediate needs

- Specialised technical support in bamboo handicrafts and furniture production
- Financial support to set up a revolving fund so that more people can benefit from the initiative
- Links to markets
- Access to carbon finance and low carbon technologies



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Partnership

- ❶ **Taita Taveta Wildlife Forum (TTWF)**, a regional umbrella organisation for natural resource user groups, leads the initiative. TTWF provides technical support, coordination and project implementation monitoring
- ❷ **The RONGO Water Resources Users Association** provides access to the local community and helps mobilise them
- ❸ **The Kenya Forest Service** is the lead government agency for conserving, developing and sustainably managing Kenya's forest resources. It provides the initiative with policy guidelines and technical support, especially with regard to setting up bamboo nurseries



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: The initiative will increase the amount of irrigated farming area by 5 % within two years through the use of cost-effective technology. It will also improve the skills of not less than 150 young people and woman artisans, thus engaging disadvantaged groups in the bamboo cottage industry.

Environmental impact: The initiative aims to conserve what remains of Taita Hills Forests. This area forms part of the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity hotspot and

provides a valuable ecosystem to almost 300,000 people and countless animals in the Tsavo East National Park.

Economic impact: The initiative will provide rural households with a steady income, create employment opportunities for young people and women and produce more cost-effective construction and furniture production materials, enabling local businesses to be more competitive.

Contact

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SEED Partners

SEED's founding partners are the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and SEED is hosted by UNEP-WCMC. Other current partners are the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America; the European Union; Conservation International; and SEED's corporate partner, Hisense.

About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: www.seedinit.org

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