

Community-based NTFP Enterprises (CBNE) Forum

2-4 June 2021



NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS AND COMMUNITIES

More than a quarter of the world's forests are managed by indigenous and local communities and smallholder forest users, yet their efforts often go unnoticed. This is quite alarming, considering that approximately 1.3 billion people depend on forests resources for employment, forest products and contributions to livelihoods and incomes.

Global studies have shown that income from natural forests and other natural areas accounted for 28 percent of total household income, nearly as much as crops. Similar studies have also underscored how community forest enterprises (CFEs) can add value to local forest economies and help to reduce poverty, which in turn, encourages local people to invest time and money in their forests and in a range of other assets.

Below the forest canopy, many products are harvested and traded by communities and their community forest producer groups. These products are known as **non-timber forest products (NTFPs)**.

When we talk about the crucial task of managing forests, we also talk about the minute details of managing NTFPs. The crucial tasks of keeping forests and its components intact are done mainly by indigenous and local communities based on their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)

In a forest ecosystem, often timber products only comprise 10% of all products whereas 90% are NTFPs. NTFPs play an important role in the livelihoods of rural and forest people as a source of food, medicine, construction materials, and income. These products are estimated to account for as much as 25% of the income of close to one billion people. Unfortunately, NTFPs are still barely recognized for their importance in rural livelihoods and in forest conservation in general.

Community-based NTFP Enterprises (CBNEs) have the potential to stimulate income generation for sustainably produced forest products, whose values can provide incentives as well for forest protection and for the maintenance of cultures. NTFP-EP and its partners in South and Southeast Asia have been supporting over 1,000 CBNEs over the last two decades supporting over 25,000 individuals. But considering Social Forestry Programs in South and Southeast Asia are growing, the potentials of hundreds of thousands of CBNEs are a largely untapped resource to improve community well-being, protect forests, maintain local cultures and traditions, and increase incomes.

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs)

are all biological products other than timber extracted from forests for human use. NTFPs include fruits and nuts, vegetables, fish and game, forest honey, medicinal plants, resins, essences and a range of barks and fibers such as bamboo, rattans, and a host of other palms and grasses, among other species.

NTFP-EP 

CBNEs are often considered “small” players in the industry with little capacity, scale and market access to benefit enterprise owners. In reality, these enterprises contribute significantly to the health and beauty industry, food industry, cosmetics, furniture and craft, and textile industries, just to name a few. But, CBNEs often lack the organization and consolidation capacities that allows them to approach the market strategically and capitalize on their unique points of leverage. Though community forestry and social forestry programs in ASEAN have been gaining ground, a dynamic and supportive political environment is still to be seen for these enterprises to become successful. However, the coronavirus pandemic has made the situation more challenging, with regular markets and exhibition opportunities closed or postponed.

NTFP-EP and partners take the opportunity to channel the public’s focus towards information exchange, capacity enhancement, market engagement, and political action in support for CBNEs.

In June 2021 we will be launching the Forest Harvest Forum on CBNEs: Valuing the Understory.

During these unprecedented times, we are taking to online media forms to draw on energies and strategies from promising CBNEs, to create a venue for sharing, exchanging, partnering, and bringing the NTFP understory to cross over into more familiar ground for more sectors, more segments, and more generations to solicit attention and action to ultimately provide opportunities for CBNEs to grow, connect, and navigate in the new normal.

OBJECTIVES

NTFP-EP intends to hold a three-day online event as a platform for

- 1. Learning and Improving Skill and Knowledge in CBNE management and Development** - by sharing best practice while highlighting the innovations made during the pandemic, CBNEs can draw inspiration from each other and mentors.
- 2. Meeting and forging better understanding and collaborations among CBNE Value Chain Players** - accelerating the pace of strategic engagement between players in the sector, especially players in NTFP value chains, requires stimulating discussion with innovators and leaders in the digital realm. Increasingly innovative ways to market products online are constantly being developed. Tapping broader digital markets will help CBNEs in their breakthroughs.
- 3. Advocating for a better enabling environment for CBNEs** - the pandemic has only exacerbated the uneven playing field these small producers have been working with. Discussing ways to bridge gaps and provide solutions, NTFP-EP has spearheaded guidelines with ASEAN on better management of NTFPs and is working on ways to mainstream CBNEs into the small-medium enterprise sector plans of ASEAN.

TARGET AUDIENCE



CBNE Practitioners



Forestry, social sector and MSME policymakers



Private sector in the field of Natural Products

Community-based non-timber forest product enterprises (CBNE) are

forest economic units or small businesses owned based on NTFPs and managed by indigenous peoples and local communities resulting in increased income, improved community well-being and enhanced forest ecosystem management.





STREAMS

Capacity

This stream will focus on sharing experience and practices in CBNE Capacity Building and Incubation drawn from over 20 years of experience, getting up to speed on adapting to the New Normal and highlighting the role CBNE women leaders as well as the engagement of the different sectors in scaling and the future of CBNE.

CBNE Online Gallery featuring Best Practice Experience and Videos

Online coaching clinic and EXCEED Incubation tester sessions

Masterclasses to bring on board some "gurus" in the field, especially those navigating the new normal

Online marketing tips

Connectivity and Creativity

This stream will feature topics such as Participatory Certification and Blockchain Technologies will be broached and explored for their benefits to CBNEs. Exploring opportunities for the youth, especially in seeking technological solutions and strategies to bridge gaps and create value, is also a target of the forum. Approaches like boosted crowdfunding models and hackathons will also be explored.

Sustainable Brands and Wholesalers Panel

Online marketplace which provides incentives to first batches of buyers get free delivery in country

Crowd funding for CBNE initiatives

Hackathon for problem-solving or concept ideas, targeting millennials

Forest Harvest Collective Mark consultations

Conducive Environment

This stream focuses on the importance of government partnerships and scientific evidence in how CBNEs have gained prominence in the past. Furthermore, a supportive research and science community is also important to assist in differentiating CBNE products from others. Fostering a conducive environment is all the more critical as small producers struggle through the pandemic.

Advancement in Policy Development in CBNEs – National, and Local Levels

Presenting Cutting Edge Research In adding value to NTFPs

ASEAN level CFE MSME guidelines discussions and inputs and the roll-out of NTFP protocols

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- **Private sector representatives** to be panelists or participate in matching sessions with CBNEs
- **Youth sector** to organize youth events, participate in innovative contests and events (crowdfunding, hackathons, etc.)
- **Community-based NTFP Enterprises** to be featured, receive tips and have the opportunity to ask questions and develop strategies with experts
- **International and national donors** to scope possible partners and co-sponsor sessions and events
- **Local organizations** to have projects supporting promising initiatives featured or launch products
- **Researchers/scientists** to present cutting edge NTFP research
- **NGOs** to link up producer partners with other CBNEs and learn from the resource persons and experiences shared by stakeholders as well as learn about emerging trends in the field



Freshly harvested honey comb
(photo by Vith Sovan / NTFP-EP Cambodia)