



Transport regulations which are sympathetic to the needs of small producers can help to increase producer prices. Existing regulations in Zambia fail to do this. (Crispen Marunda)

Tackling transport regulations

Last year's annual report described how Brazil's Environmental Protection Agency (IBAMA) abolished transport regulations which penalised large numbers of people involved in the trade in non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Thanks, in part, to research by CIFOR, IBAMA announced in mid-2006 that transport documents would no longer be needed for ornamental, medicinal and aromatic bulbs, fibres and leaves of native or planted species.

Unfortunately, Brazil is the exception rather than the rule when it comes to reducing regulations governing the movement of forest products. "If you grow maize, you can transport it to the urban markets without any trouble," explains Emmanuel Chidumayo, a CIFOR consultant based at the University of Zambia, "but if you try to market forest products from your land, you will be stopped innumerable times at road blocks, where you'll have to show your permit." It is time, he argues, for the government in Zambia to follow the lead provided by Brazil and do away with the regulations which hurt rural communities.

During the past year, CIFOR partners have had some success in influencing government policy

towards the transport of forest goods in Indonesia. As in so many other countries, it is much simpler to transport agricultural crops such as palm oil than timber or NTFPs, even if the latter come from land owned by local communities and produced in partnership with companies. Anyone wishing to transport forest products must get a permit from the district forest office and pay a range of fees, and frequently bribes as well. Getting the necessary permits can be particularly difficult for small producers.

The Community Company Forest Link (ComForLink), a forum that brings together companies that are developing partnerships with smallholders and local communities, has been lobbying the Ministry of Forestry to introduce less bureaucratic systems in order to encourage smallholder plantations. As a result of pressure from ComForLink and others, a new regulation was introduced in 2007. This regulation simplified the procedures for the marketing of the 18 tree species commonly traded by smallholders, including acacia and teak. "This is a vast improvement on the previous regulations, which only covered three species," explains CIFOR researcher Ani Adiwinita

Nawir, who facilitates ComForLink with Philip Manalu. "Transport permits for the 18 species covered by the new regulation can now be obtained from village forestry officers, instead of the district forest office, saving both costs and time."

CIFOR research suggests that transport regulations which are sympathetic to the needs of small producers and smallholders can help to reduce forest destruction, increase producer prices and stimulate the domestication of forest products close to markets. CIFOR reviews in Zambia and

elsewhere in southern Africa have shown that the existing transport regulations are doing almost none of these things. "Policy-makers and researchers urgently need to examine the existing regulations governing the movement of forest products and come up with alternatives that benefit local people and the environment," says Bruce Campbell, the director of CIFOR's Livelihoods Programme.

Network News

In last year's annual report, PhD students in Guatemala and Belize reflected on how their association with the Poverty and Environment Network (PEN), established by CIFOR in 2004, was helping their research. At the time 24 PEN partners, mainly PhD students, were gathering data from 5-6000 households, in 200-250 villages, on everything from the harvesting of forest products to household wage incomes and access to forests and markets. It is hoped that the information will dramatically increase our knowledge about the relationship between forests and poverty.

In 2007, a new tranche of funding was received from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). "This will make a considerable difference, as we can now seriously plan how to move forward, without having to worry about the availability of funds," says Arild Angelsen, the PEN coordinator. He was particularly heartened by the comments made by the DFID project reviewer, who believed that the PEN project had a high potential for reducing poverty. "The project promises results of intellectual significance due to the innovative data collection methods and analysis," wrote the reviewer.

Thirty-eight PEN partners have completed or are still collecting data from more than 9000 households in 350-400 villages or communities. A PEN research fellow, Ronnie Babigumira, was recruited in 2007, and he will be in charge of building the PEN global data set. During 2007, the geographical scope of the PEN project expanded. Funding from the Danish Research Council now supports PEN studies in Cambodia, Ghana and Burkina Faso, and a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is giving PEN a significant presence in Malawi and Uganda. This means that the global data set, the first of its kind, will provide new insights into the relationship between forests and poverty in 26 developing countries in all.



PEN partner Miriam Wyman (far left) training an assistant at Scotland Half Moon, Belize. (Miriam Wyman)