

IPSI Case Study Summary Sheet

Basic Information

Title of case study			
Sacred forests: valorization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources for sustainable management			
Submitting IPSI member organization(s)			
NGO Circle for Conservation of Natural Resources (ONG Ce.Sa.Re.N)			
Other contributing organization(s) <i>(IPSI members and/or non-members)</i>			
Author(s) and affiliation(s)			
Achille Orphée Lokossou, Bienvenu Mensah Bossou (ONG Ce.Sa.Re.N)			
Format of case study <i>(manuscript or audiovisual)</i>	Manuscript	Language	English
Keywords <i>(3-5 key concepts included in the case study)</i>			
Benin, Genetic resources, Sacred forests, Traditional knowledge			
Date of submission <i>(or update, if this is an update of an existing case study)</i>		25 August 2016	
Web link <i>(of the case study or lead organization if available for more information)</i>	https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:5769/SEPLS_in_Africa_FINAL_lowres_web.pdf		

Geographical Information

Country <i>(where site(s) or activities described in the case study are located – can be multiple, or even “global”)</i>									
Benin									
Location(s) <i>(within the country or countries – leave blank if specific location(s) cannot be identified)</i>									
Gbévozoun and Gnahouizoun Sacred Forests									
Longitude/latitude or Google Maps link									
https://www.google.com/maps/@6.798584,1.6738653,9z?hl=en									
Ecosystem(s)									
Forest	x	Grassland		Agricultural		In-land water		Coastal	
Dryland		Mountain		Urban/peri-urban		Other <i>(Please specify)</i>			
Socioeconomic and environmental characteristics of the area									
Benin is a country located in West Africa. Geographically, it lies between latitudes 6–13° N and longitudes 0–4° E. With a hot and humid climate, Benin has more than 2,940 remnant sacred forests covering a total area of 18,360 ha. The majority of Benin’s population lives in rural areas.									
Description of human-nature interactions in the area									
The most important socio-economic activities in the country center on agriculture, fisheries, livestock, commerce, and craft-making. Agriculture is the main source of wealth. Agricultural systems are dominated by extensive farming with shifting cultivation and slash-and-burn practices. Over 90% of sacred forests are adjacent to, or surrounded by crop fields. The practice of shifting cultivation threatens sacred forests across the country and is a cause of increased land pressure.									

Contents

Status (<i>"ongoing" or "completed"</i>)	Completed	Period (<i>MM/YY to MM/YY</i>)	2012
Rationale (<i>why activities or policies described, or information shared in the case study are needed</i>)			
Studies recently undertaken on sacred groves in southern Benin have shown that 60% are in a state of advanced degradation. The regressive trend affecting these ecosystems is a major threat to biodiversity and the lives of surrounding communities who rely heavily on ecosystem services. Despite their socioeconomic and ecological significance, these particular ecosystems have long been neglected by the scientific community and the forest administration.			
Objectives (<i>goals of activities or policies described, or of producing the case study</i>)			
Strengthen the capacity of communities on ABS; Develop a Bio-cultural Community Protocol (BCP) in accordance with the principles of the Nagoya Protocol; Increase the income of the owners of sacred forests and TK, through development activities and promotion of the value chain concept; Ensure the effective involvement of local communities in the implementation of the ABS process.			
Activities and/or practices employed			
During 2012, with the financial support of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), an inventory study for the rehabilitation and sustainable management of sacred forests within Ramsar sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin (ITTO 2012) was implemented. CeSaReN was primarily tasked to collect baseline information on the sustainable management of sacred forests.			
Results			
32 traditional medicines, made using genetic resources and traditional knowledge, were tested via photochemical analysis, cellular and sub-chronic toxicity with rats, and microbiological assessment. Of the 32 traditional drugs reviewed, 24 traditional medicines proved safe and effective to be used for treating diseases for which they are traditionally used.			
Lessons learned (<i>factors in success or failure, challenges and opportunities</i>)			
The Nagoya Protocol on access to GRs and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits can be applied to GRs and associated TK of sacred forests; There is heavy reliance of some populations on traditional medicine; The high exploitation of medicinal bio-GRs could lead to an over exploitation of these resources and expose them to the risk of extinction; A partnership between TK holders and research institutions can promote the use of GRs.			
Key messages			
Local communities have understood that the Protocol fills a gap and that its implementation could contribute to a fair collaboration between traditional and modern medicine. However, reaching this level of collaboration requires long-term action.			
Relationship to other IPSI activities (<i>if the case study is related to any other IPSI collaborative activities, case studies, etc.</i>)			
This case study originally appeared in the publication "Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes in Africa".			
Funding (<i>any relevant information about funding of activities or projects described in the case study</i>)			
Support for this project was provided by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme.			

Contributions to Global Agendas

CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets (<https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>)

The table below shows based on the self-evaluation by author(s). ● and ■ indicates the “direct” or “indirect” contributions to the CBD’s Aichi Biodiversity Targets respectively to which the work described in this case study contributes to.

Strategic Goal A				Strategic Goal B					
■		■				■			
Strategic Goal C			Strategic Goal D			Strategic Goal E			
■		●			●		■	●	

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>)

The table below shows based on the self-evaluation by author(s). ● and ■ indicates the “direct” or “indirect” contributions to the SDGs respectively to which the work described in this case study contributes to.

		■						
		■			●			