

ZIZIPHUS AND BALANITES TREE PRODUCTS VALUE CHAINS FORUM IN NIGER

30-31 MARCH 2022 | NIAMEY, NIGER





Introduction

Regreening Africa has implemented restoration efforts in Niger's municipalities of Ouallam, Simiri (partnering with World Vision) and in Hamdallaye (partnering with CARE), in an effort to reverse land degradation for 40,000 households over an area of 90,000 hectares in the three municipalities. The project focused on promoting regreening practices adapted to different ecological, economic and social contexts, and supported value chain development interventions at project target sites.

Currently, market access in the Sahel is hampered by barriers such as:

- seasonality,
- poor or limited relationships between market actors,
- limited market information, a poor policy environment,
- high transaction and transport costs,
- little or no added value creation,

- lack or insufficient access to financial instruments,
- instability of supply, and
- poor infrastructure (storage, post-harvest handling equipment, quality standards), among others.

To overcome this, **Regreening Africa sought to create networking opportunities and a win-win ecosystem to promote prioritised value chains in Niger**, namely that of *Zizyphus mauritiana* and *Balanites aegyptiaca*. Fundamental to this, was the organization of a national forum on value chains.

The aimed to **foster visibility and communication** on restoration efforts along with the development of these value chains. The forum took place from March 30 to 31, 2022 in Niamey at the Soleil d'Afrique complex.

VALUE CHAIN FORUM OBJECTIVES

Improve visibility on Regreening Africa's development of *Zizyphus mauritiana* and *Balanites aegyptiaca* value chains in Niger.

Promote co-learning and experience sharing between partners and projects to encourage or support the development of *Zizyphus mauritiana* and *Balanites aegyptiaca* value chains.



Provide an opportunity for local, regional and national actors to exhibit their products and services, leveraging the development of these value chains.

Promote public-private partnerships and network relations between actors.

Facilitate a direct link between local chain actors and potential buyers and service providers.

Forum proceedings

The national tree value chain forum was devoted to information and experience sharing and provided a good opportunity for information sharing between NGO's and Government actors on tree value chain development.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The forum made it possible for various stakeholders to evaluate constraints and challenges related to the development of non-timber and agroforestry products value chains in general and on *Zizyphus mauritiana* and *Balanites aegyptiaca* in particular. Participants expressed a wish to institutionalize this event and hold a forum every year. There was a proposal to consider other value chains, such as on moringa and gum arabic, that are already part of the national government plans, for enhanced political buy-in.

PRESENTATIONS

An update on Regreening Africa's project implementation in Niger during the last four years was presented. It was reported that more than 31,000 households in Niger had been supported to reverse land degradation through Assisted Natural Regeneration. This covers:

- 2,500 hectares of degraded pastoral land rehabilitated in the project intervention areas;
- 3,700 improved stoves were built to reduce the use of firewood;
- 19 village nurseries were set up and supported with materials and inputs; and
- 108 Village Committees were established and/or strengthened for surveillance and management of natural resources.

Additional presentations were made by:

- **PASEC** (projet d'appui à l'agriculture sensible aux risques climatiques) and **ICRISAT** promoted agroforestry value chains at the local level.

SECTORS REPRESENTED AT THE FORUM

Discussions involved actors drawn from different sectors including:

- Representative of the European Union
- Directorate of Water and Forests, Ministry of the Environment
- Fight Against Desertification
- Great Green Wall
- Directorate for the Promotion of the Green Economy and Development of Value Chains
- Departmental Directorates of the Environment of Ouallam and Kollo
- Micro-finance institutions (ASSUSU SA, PROXIFINA, ACCESS FINANCE AFRICA)
- Town halls of Simiri and Ouallam
- Research institutions (ICRISAT, INRAN, CIFOR-ICRAF)
- Development projects and programs
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Producers and processors from Regreening Africa's intervention sites



- **ICRISAT** have also provided equipment (grinding and oil extraction machine) for balanites nuts and ziziphus to selected women's groups. Their work showed that farmers integrating ziziphus together with cereal crops were generating higher yields and incomes.
- **RECA** (Réseau National des Chambres d'Agriculture) shared information on its digital library called "DUDDAL" (<https://duddal.org/s/bibnum-promap/find>) which provides a database with resources covering more than 4000 publications in the field of agricultural development in Niger. The library is hosted by the government and presents a good opportunity to integrate Regreening Africa's learnings.
- **A panel comprised of local micro-finance institutions** (Proxifina, Access Finance Africa, Asusu SA) and the Niger Agency for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (ANMC) sought to enlighten the participants on their institution's products and services. This generated a lot of attention from participants seeking further clarification on access to the products and services offered.
- Representatives from the **Great Green Wall** highlighted the objectives and activities of the initiative, including supporting the development of a national strategy and action plans on, land restoration, product processing, and promotion of agroforestry value chain. It also supports actors involved in the processing of non-timber forest products through capacity building and equipment support.
- Representatives from **Sahara Sahel Food** focused on the value of local plant species to local communities, particularly the by-products and nutritional values that can be obtained from local species.
- **Testimonials** were given by two processors and a producer of non-timber forest products and agroforestry products. The producer requested Regreening Africa's support in acquiring modern processing equipment and marketing of processed products.

PRODUCT EXHIBITION DAY

The national forum ended on the second day (March 31, 2022) with a product exhibition day, where *Zizyphus mauritiana* and *Balanites aegyptica* products were showcased by processors and traders from all parts of the country. The exhibition attracted several actors, but lacked effective participation from the public in Niamey due to insufficient communication through public media on the event. The Regreening Africa country team linkages with key project entrepreneurs and value chain actors such as ANMC, Media, and Ministries.



Key insights on agroforestry value chain development in Niger

The forum identified a number of constraints hindering the development of agroforestry value chains in Niger. These include:



Poor communication between actors involved in the non-timber and agroforestry products chains



Weak collaboration between the various actors involved in the value chains



Weak support of local actors intervening in the various agroforestry value chains



Local actors' lack modern processing equipment



Lack of outlets for the sale of certain processed products



Low subsidy from the state and partners for development of agroforestry value chain activities



Limited promotion, standardization and certification of products

RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAY FORWARD



There is a need to identify and map all actors involved in the tree products value chains



Creation of a coordination platform to bring together all actors involved



Orientation of development partners by state services to support and subsidize local actors involved in tree products value chains



The provision of a state-guaranteed fund to micro-finance institutions to facilitate access to credit for small scale entrepreneurs



Need for subsidies to help in standardization and certification of processed non-timber agroforestry products to facilitate marketing and trade



Make the national forum an annual event with coordination by the Directorate of Green Economy

Suggested Citation

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KANDS Collective hello@kandscollective.com

