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Cameroon Gender and  
Environment Watch

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# BASELINE STUDY REPORT

This baseline studies was conducted by Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) between January and February 2012 for the Project “Oku Community Forest Management for Benefit Sharing” funded by the World Bank and administered by Catholic Relief Service

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*Report produced by Wirsiy Emmanuel Binyuy in 2012*

## **Acknowledgement**

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CAMGEW is also grateful to the Oku Council; Divisional Officer for Oku; Traditional authorities; Sub Delegate of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) for Oku; Sub Delegate of the Delegation of Ministry of Livestock, Fishery and Animal Industry (MINEPIA) for Oku; Oku Honey Cooperative Society; common initiative groups in Oku; Oku Forest Management Institutions; schools and churches that were resourceful when they were contacted during this study.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Presentation of CAMGEW and project background

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) is a non profit created in October 2007 with authorization number N° 000998/RDA/JO6/BAPP to solve environmental and women's problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW works locally and thinks globally, integrating gender in solving environmental problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW believes that the future of our mother planet-earth is in our hands and also that the planet can be sustained by putting social and environmental justice at the centre of development. CAMGEW seeks to achieve her objectives by liaising with other like minded organizations worldwide. She has resolved to function according to core values of honesty, engagement and dedication in total respect of its constitution. CAMGEW has as **vision** "Changing lives of women, children and communities while protecting the environment" and as **mission** to fight poverty; promote sound environmental management, gender balance and economic sustainable development.

CAMGEW won the World Bank organized Development Market Place Competition in Cameroon on good governance in the forestry, health and education sector in July 2011. The project CAMGEW submitted was titled 'Oku Community Forest Management for Benefit Sharing'. This project is to train 120 persons from groups (especially women groups) and schools on bee farming, provide them with 200 colonized beehives at subsidized rates. The project is to nurse and plant 7000 trees in the Oku Community forest. This bee farming training workshop is in this line. Considering that the participation of forest community in forest management is part of forest governance, CAMGEW through this project engages local people to own beehives in the forest after receiving training for them to better manage the forest. Ownership of hives by people in Oku will push them to guide against bushfire and forest destruction as they protect beehives as source of income. Bee farming will give them a source of livelihood from the sell of honey harvested and make them see the importance to protect the forest. Oku white honey is already being considered as a Geographical Indication Product and it is hoped that the market for this honey will be secured. CAMGEW is not only interested to train those who are involved already in bee farming, she is interested to have new groups who know nothing about bee farming trained and provided with colonized beehives that will give them a source of livelihoods and make them see the need participate in the protection of the forest. In a long run CAMGEW hope to continue to work with trained groups in a network to maintain and increase their number of beehives in the forest, assist in honey harvesting, processing and marketing.

### 1.2 Objective of baseline study

The primary objective of this baseline study is to gather relevant information as regards to the situation of the Oku Community forest; and honey production, processing and marketing. The base line study is intended to;

- Put in place a project plan, implementation, monitoring and evaluation schedule;
- Set measurable indicators of project success and impact on communities
- Enable a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the project by project partners

### 1.3 Study Methodology

CAMGEW under the guidance of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) developed the method to do the baseline study. CRS visited CAMGEW in Oku and gave her technical assistance on how to do a baseline study. Together with them, questionnaires that were used to collect information for the baseline study were developed for each stakeholder. Other methods of collecting information like interview were discussed. CAMGEW prepared 75 questionnaires for various project stakeholders and distributed them to collect

information. 70 questionnaires were filled and given back to CAMGEW. Different questionnaires were prepared for the following stakeholders in Oku: Sub-Delegate of MINFOF; Sub Delegate of MINEPIA; Divisional Officer; Mayor and Councilors; Forest Management Institutions; Oku Honey Cooperative Society; Common Initiative Groups; selected schools; churches and religious groups; and some individuals. CAMGEW also interviewed some resource persons to get additional information on forest management; and bee farming, honey production, processing and marketing.

**Number of questionnaires distributed per stakeholder**

<b>Stakeholder in Oku</b>	<b>Number of Questionnaires</b>
Divisional Officer	1
MINFOF	1
MINEPIA	1
Mayor and Councilors;	3
Fon and notables	5
Oku Honey Cooperative Society	3
Forest Management Institutions	7
Common Initiative Groups	15
schools	12
churches and religious groups	7
some individuals	20

## **2.0 OKU COMMUNITY FOREST**

### **2.1 Background information on Oku Community forest**

Oku has a population of 80000 people. The traditional authority protected the forest before the coming of Birdlife International in 1987. The traditional authority protected the forest by fighting against bushfire and unsustainable use of forest resources. There are parts of the forest considered secret, that are only accessible to traditional authorities who perform certain rites and sacrifice there. The Kwifon which is the highest authority of the tradition could summon local people in case of fire in the forest to go up the forest and put off this bushfire. The Kwifon also prosecuted those who performed unsustainable activities. The position of the traditional authority became limited in protecting the forest as there was more demand for farming land and also as the population increased with settlement happening at different peripheries of the forest. The request of services by the population became unsustainable. The cutting down of the forest for farmland increased in the 1980s and there was need for a project to delimit the boundaries of the forest, restore the forest in degraded forest land, create awareness on the importance of preserving the forest, come up with improve methods of agriculture like agroforestry as alternative sources of livelihood to communities and organize the community to own and use the forest in a sustainable way. It became also necessary to define activities that local people could carryout in the forest as source of livelihoods which are sustainable.

Birdlife International came in with a project “Kilum-Ijim Forest Project” in 1987 to correct this situation. This project introduced the management of the forest by the people and for their benefit. They called it Oku Community Forest and this adopted a high participatory approach including actors from the community, traditional authorities and the government forestry administration. The community forest is managed and owned by the community who benefit from it. It is thanks to Birdlife International that this management system was introduced in the region and in Cameroon with high success rate which later led to the creation of a National Forestry Law legalising community forestry in 1994. The Cameroon forestry law of 1994 that created community forestry stated rules guiding its management basing on the success story of Oku Community Forest. The management system for community forest includes the community, traditional authorities and the government forestry administration to avoid lapses that could be found if an actor(s) was left out. The community interest in the forest is that of forest resource usage and this interest can sometimes fail to protect certain endangered or endemic species that have no direct use value to them. The government forestry administration (MINFOF) has as mandate to protect nature in all forms or to be custodians of nature. MINFOF authorities make sure that biodiversity is conserved especially those that have no direct use value to the population and those that the government authority prohibits the population from using. The traditional authorities had been custodians of forest conservation before independence and the coming into place of many factors that have somehow disrupted the traditional setting (of forest management). The traditional administration is still strong in this region with the population respecting it and their role in forest resource management has remained important especially as they have the indigenous knowledge on the forest. Their role in community forestry is indispensable.

Despite the divergence of interest that exist among these three actors there is convergence, that of making sure that the forest is sustained so that it can keep on producing goods and services to the community for biodiversity, culture and tradition to be conserved. Sometimes community forestry problems are handled by the traditional authorities and in some other cases the government or set committees that manage the forest help in solving these problems. When there are recalcitrant persons distorting the forest management process or system they are handled by the tradition or government for justice to prevail.

It has remain a clear fact locally, nationally, regionally and internationally that Birdlife International left a legacy in the region particularly in Kilum-Ijim forest by setting this first community forests with a

workable management system in Cameroon which has continued functioning well even after her departure with outstanding results that is emulated by others and replicated in other regions. This is thanks to forest institutional settings, capacity building programmes, material support, forest restoration and livelihoods programmes that Birdlife International provided to all actors and stakeholders in the region. This has helped in forest conservation and poverty alleviation. Birdlife International did the following to protect and regenerate the forest: delimitation of Community forest boundaries, forest regeneration, restriction of cultivation in the forest, control of bushfire, control of exploitation of forest products, campaign against bushfire, fire tracing, set measures to sanction forest defaulters and education of forest communities on the importance of the forest. During the period of the project Forest management Institutions were set and their capacity was built. Activities that were identified to be sustainable which community could carry out were firewood fetching (this involved only dry branches or trees), bee farming and rodent local trap setting.

Birdlife International set Forest management Institutions (FMIs) in each village close to the forest and these institutions were made up of elected members of the community who were to help in the management of forest resources for the community at the village level. The Forest management Institutions of all the seven villages that surround the Oku Community Forest came together under the Association of Oku Forest Management Institution (ASSOFOMI) to make decisions and plan on how to keep the forest intact while the community benefit from it. The FMIs had to plant trees, do fire tracing, do post tree planting monitoring, make patrols, educate the population on the importance of the forest, hold meetings with their communities and come up with forest plan of action and negotiate for forest resource sustainable exploitation. The money they get from forest sustainable forest exploitation was to be used to carry out development projects that are prioritized by their communities. This followed purely democratic process. The Kilum-Ijim Forest Project did this organization. The Birdlife International project in this forest ended in 1994. The FMIs started functioning well but when forest resource exploitation (that is harvesting of *Prunus Africana*) was negotiated and done in the Oku Community Forest the leaders of the various FMIs used most of the money from *Prunus africana* exploitation for their personal benefits and projects prioritized by their communities were not prioritized by them. The exploitation of *Prunus africana* in the forest was unsustainably done. The community members were angry that this happened. The Oku traditional authority who had been custodians to the forest before Birdlife International came were disturbed as the forest which is their natural heritage, the root of their tradition and a source of livelihood for their people was unsustainably exploited and its revenue benefited a few individuals. The Oku council that represents the people saw that this was wrong. The FMIs were organizing the second harvesting of *Prunus africana* again after the first that led to the death of trees in the forest, the traditional authority through His Royal Highness the Fon of Oku and the Oku Council decried this behaviour to the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife last year and the activities of the FMIs were suspended. Last year 2011, the government of Cameroon through the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife gave some funds to the traditional authority and the Oku Council to plant some trees in the forest. This was done.

As concerns honey, individuals and groups have been practicing bee farming and producing honey that is processed and sold locally and nationally. The Oku Honey Cooperative Society is the largest and the oldest group with members doing bee keeping. She does bee farming training for her members and the community; provide bee farming equipment to her members without fee; pay honey upfront from members; and process, package and market her honey. Many other bee farmers are now organizing themselves into other groups, improving on honey production and its quality; and providing better services to their members and community. The Oku Sub Delegation of Ministry of Livestock, Fishery and Animal Industry is also working to organize bee farmers while promoting bee farming training and the production

of quality honey. There are many organizations that have been working to improve on bee keeping and honey production in Oku. The production, processing and marketing of Oku honey still need much to be done in terms of standardization, capacity building and improvement of equipment.

## 2.2 Questionnaire data analysis

### FOREST MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS

7 questionnaires were given to the 7 leaders of the FMIs in Oku.

Question	Yes	No	No response
Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?	7	0	0
Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?	1	6	0
Is the Forest Management Institutions supporting forest regeneration in Oku?	1	6	0
Is the FMIs ready to support forest regeneration	6	0	1
Are FMIs receiving any funds for their tree planting programmes?	0	7	0
Are there conflicts that arise from the distribution of the revenue from forest products?	5	2	0

#### How the Forest Management Institutions managing it?

Tree nursery and planting	Fire tracing
Patrol	Patrol in forest

#### What is your FMIs doing to conserve the forest?

Fire tracing	Planting trees	Patrols in forest
Removing exotic trees	Holding planning meetings	Ecotourism

#### How do the FMIs organize a typical tree planting campaign?

Various opinions were given here by the different FMIs

Exercise abandoned	Plan a day for each member to plant at least 3 trees	General meeting organized to plan on tree planting
1	1	5

#### Can you give us the statistics of trees planted in the last 3 years?

Upper Shingah-FMI	Emfvemii -FMI	Kedjem Mawes	Others
2008-1200 trees 2009-2000 trees 2010-800 trees	2006-2000 trees 2007-2007	2009-1500 trees	Non in the past 3 years

**How is the post-planting monitoring done?**

Clearing around planted tree	Monthly visits/monitoring/patrols	Replacements of death trees
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**What working relationship do you have with the council?**

No working relation	Not cordial	FMI considered illegal	Indifferent
3	1	1	2

**What place does the forest occupy in the culture of the Oku people?**

Host shrines	Host carving trees	Host Bannermens turaco a bird with red feathers that are used to decorate notables
Sacrificial sites	Host medicinal plants	Forest formerly protected by Quifon

**How are conflicts managed?**

Community intervention	Traditional intervention	Equal distribution of income
Administrative intervention	Consultation with stakeholders	Benefit sharing principles

**TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES**

6 questionnaires were administered to 7 traditional leaders in Oku.

Question	Yes	No	No response
Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?	5	0	0
Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?	3	2	0
Is the palace ready to support forest regeneration	4	0	1
Is the palace receiving any funds for their tree planting programmes?	3	2	0
Are there conflicts from the management of forest resources in your fondon?	4	1	0

**How is the palace managing forest degradation?**

Sanction to defaulters through fines	Patrol in forest	Checking against bushfire Fire tracing
Planting forest native trees	Suspension of Prunus africana harvesting	Discouraging animal keeping in the forest

**What is the palace doing to conserve the forest?**

Halt cutting of life trees	Planting trees with funds from MINFOF
Penalties to defaulters	Ecotourism

**How does the palace organize a typical tree planting campaign?**

Various opinions were given here by the different traditional authorities

The Quifon organize tree planting by making announcement on market day	Tree planting announce to community by Oku Community radio to mobilize community	Tree planting announce to community by town criers to mobilize community
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	members	members
The traditional authorities instruct FMIs to regenerate the forest	Palace attendance plant trees in secret forest	

**Can you give us the statistics of trees planted in the last 3 years?**

Data not available

**How is the post-planting monitoring done?**

Clearing around planted tree	Monthly visits/monitoring/patrols	FMIs charged with this task
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**What working relationship do you have with the FMIs?**

Very poor working relation	Not cordial	Non	Partners
1	1	1	2

**What place does the forest occupy in the culture of the Oku people?**

Host shrines	Host carving trees	Forest a natural heritage
Sacrificial sites	Host medicinal plants	Forest formerly protected by Quifon

**How are conflicts managed?**

Community intervention	Traditional intervention	Equal distribution of income
Administrative intervention	Consultation with stakeholders	Benefit sharing principles

### ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES

The questionnaires of all services of the administration (D.O, Councils, MINEPIA and MINFOF) are analysed as a block,

6 questionnaires were given to the 6 administrative leaders in Oku.

Question	Yes	No	No response
Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?	6	0	0
Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?	6	0	0
Is the administration ready to support forest regeneration	6	0	
Are there conflicts that arise from the management of forest resources in your area?	6	0	0

**How the administration managing it?**

Planting of trees by Council	Technical assistance from MINFOF-Oku	Restricting the cultivation of crops in forest
Control of bushfire in forest	Control of stray animals in forest	Control of exploitation of forest resources

**What is the administration doing to conserve the forest?**

Removing exotic trees -Council	MINEPIA-Oku: Encouraging planting of bee loving trees	MINFOF-Technical assistance
Planting trees-Council		

**How does the administration organize a typical tree planting campaign?**

Various opinions were given here by the different FMIs

Various opinions were given here by the different traditional authorities

Council-Recruit workers to do the tree planting exercise with MINFOF-Oku technical support	Tree planting announce to community by Oku Community radio to mobilize community members	Sensitise local groups like Manjong and some CIGs to get involve in tree planting
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**How is the post-planting monitoring done?**

Delegate of MINFOF-Oku charge with supervision	Council workers carryout regular visits/monitoring/patrols
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**Types of conflicts?**

Conflicts among stakeholders on their roles and responsibilities
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**2.3 Efforts by various stakeholders to regenerate the forest**

The government of Cameroon through the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) provided funds to the Traditional authority and Oku Council to plant trees in the forest last year. The Sub Delegate of MINFOF in Oku provided technical support for the planting of these trees. The palace organized a tree planting event by involving palace attendance and youths in the tree planting exercise. Palace attendance planted trees in the shrines where other persons could not enter. The Kwifon which is the highest organ of the tradition in Oku makes announcement of the tree planting exercise on the market day and the awaited positive response to this is equally in keeping with traditional norms. The palace uses also the town crier to pass the message to the community. The Oku Council recruited labourers from the community to do the tree planting under the supervision of the Sub Delegate of MINFOF for Oku. The Oku Community Radio is used by Traditional authority and Oku Council to reach out to the community. The Sub Delegate of MINFOF is present during each tree planting exercise to ensure that tree planting methods and distances between plants are respected.

**2.4 Post planting monitoring**

Presently, the Sub Delegate of MINFOF for Oku, council workers and palace attendance do post tree planting monitoring. They patrol the forest, weed around the planted trees until they pick-up. Clearing is also done around the planted trees to free them from other plants that may overcome them. FMIs used to do this exercise but failed before their activities being suspended.

**2.5 Areas of the forest that need rehabilitation as identified by stakeholders**

Information gathered from Oku forest stakeholders showed that some areas of the forest had suffered from bushfire and over grazing. These areas need rehabilitation. Areas vulnerable to landslides and erosion were also identified to be planted with trees as a risk preventive measure. The summit of the mountain

with fewer trees where grazing is being carried out was another area identified that needs rehabilitation. Some border areas of the forest with farmland that have fewer trees needs more trees to be planted. Many persons also saw the need to plant trees on forest savannah which presently lack trees. The following sites of the forest were identified by the Sub Delegate of MINFOF for Oku, Sub Delegate for MINEPIA for Oku, the Oku Council and the various FMIs to be in high need of rehabilitation:

- Mbai and Nchilly zones that have suffered from rampant bushfire and over exploitation
- Mbockenghas, Simonkoh, Manchok and Ngvuinkei I
- Kedjem, Mawes, Upper Shinga, Eibingse

## 2.6 Trees earmarked for forest rehabilitation

### Trees earmarked by various stakeholders for forest rehabilitation

Stakeholder	Reason for choice	Types of trees
Oku Council	Maintain water catchments and increase forest cover	<i>Prunus africana, Podocarpus, Albezia and Carapa</i>
MINEPIA	Bee loving trees	<i>Prunus africana, Nuxia congesta, Scheffera abyssivica, Shefflera mouric, Vokanga</i>
Traditional authority	Protection of natural and cultural heritage	<i>Prunus africana, Carapa, Rapania,</i>
FMIs	Maintaining the natural heritage	<i>Prunus africana, Podorcapus, Scheffera abyssivica</i>

## 2.7 Trees planted in the Oku Community Forest for the past 3 years

CAMGEW was not been able to get accurate data on trees planted in the forest for the past three years. The Oku Council gave us the following statistics of trees she has planted in the forest for the past 3 years.

### Oku Council statistical data on planted trees in the forest for the past 3 years

Year	Number of trees
2011	6000
2010	5000
2009	3000

## 2.8 Removal of invasive trees from the Oku Community forest

Some areas of the Oku Community Forest have Eucalyptus trees planted in them and some of these areas are watershed. The Eucalyptus trees have been reducing the amount of water provided by these watersheds and reducing biodiversity where they are planted. The Oku Council provided some funds last year for these trees to be cut down from some parts of the forest especially watersheds. The Sub-Delegate of MINFOF for Oku supervised the work. We never got the exact number of trees that were cut.

## 2.9 The situation of non timber forest products (NTFPs) in Oku forest

The Oku Community forest is known for its NTFPs than its timber. The forest has been used for years for bee farming. It is also rich in medicinal plants which are exploited by herbalist for treatment of human diseases. Oku is known nationally for natural medicine and this is link to the rich diverse medicinal plants

present in the forest. The high medicinal value of plants in the forest and the production of white flowers by these trees gives honey produced by the forest a white colour and a rich medicinal value. The forest is rich in *Prunus africana* which has been largely exploited from the forest for its commercial value. Its exploitation was suspended recently by the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife to give an opportunity for various forest stakeholders to concert. It is alleged that the harvesting of *Prunus africana* was not sustainable and that much of money raised from its exploitation never reached the communities. The forest is rich in animal biodiversity and host endangered birds like Bannermans turaco.

### **2.10 The place of the forest in the culture of the people**

Forest is home to Bannermans turaco an endangered bird found only in Bamenda Highland region and Western Highland of Adamaoua regions of Cameroon. The red feathers of this bird are used to decorate notables. The forest has shrines, caves and sacrificial sites that are secret places for sacrificial rites. Formerly the forest was protected by Kwifon which is the highest authority in the palace. There are many traditional rites and sacrifices that can only be performed in the forest. Some are only performed with plants harvested from the forest.

### **2.11 Relation between stakeholders**

The relationship between all the stakeholders seems good. All stakeholders seem to have a bad impression of Forest Management Institutions. The FMIs are considered not to be honest. Their activities are considered to abuse the forest.

### **2.12 Conflicts, their prevention and resolution on Oku Community Forest**

Conflicts have resulted because of lack of transparency and accountability on the management of forest resources. Grazers compete for space with bee farmers. Sometimes bee farmers and grazers have confrontation when goats push down bee hives. To manage conflicts the government and traditional administration have been involved in convening meetings with various parties involved and the problem is solved. Consultations also take place with other stakeholders.

### **2.13 Suggestions and Recommendations for Oku Community Forest management**

For the forest to be better managed the following suggestions and recommendations were made by the forest stakeholders during baseline study:

- Bring all forest stakeholders to the table to discuss on how to keep the Oku Community Forest healthy and make sure forest resources benefit the population;
- Remove all Eucalyptus and Cypress trees present in the forest;
- Setting a yearly tree nursery of native Oku Community forest trees(bee loving, watershed friendly and medicinal) to make sure that there is availability of trees for planting every year;
- Plant more native trees(bee loving, watershed friendly and medicinal) in the forest on degraded areas;
- Carryout post monitoring on all planted trees in the forest;
- Environmental awareness on the Oku Community forest to stop all bushfires, overgrazing;
- Creating alternative sources of livelihoods for community members like better farming methods (agroforestry) and animal husbandry(piggery, rabbitry, poultry, bee farming, etc);
- Regular patrols on the forest to check against forest degradation;
- Strengthen sanctions on forest defaulters;
- Discourage over exploitation of forest resources.

## **3.0 HONEY PRODUCTION, PROCESSING AND MARKETING**

### **3.1 Honey Production**

It was clear that honey play a big role in the socio-economic wellbeing of the people of Oku in health and education. Honey is medicinal and is used as sweetener. There are many natural medicines that can not be prepared without honey. Honey production help in the protection of environment as the setting of beehives in the forest promotes the participation of local people in the management of their forest. When community members own beehives in the forest they no longer engage in bushfire nor cut down trees from the forest for fear that the trees may fall on their beehives. The Oku council and the traditional authorities said they are promoting honey production by protecting the forest for this activity and also by encouraging the community to practice bee farming. The Oku Council has given some financial support to some bee farmers. All honey actors told us that the relationship between honey production and the forest is very strong. Many of them summaries it with this phrase “no forest, no honey”. Some explained that if the forest is protected, production of honey will increase in Oku as bees will be sure to have enough nectar to collect from the flowers of trees. Bees love vegetation and if there is no forest there will be no bees and subsequently no honey.

### **3.2 Bee farmers’ organizations**

Many people produce, process and sell their honey individually and because of lack of finance to own honey processing equipment their honey is of low quality. Some of them lack skills in honey production, processing and marketing. Some honey associations exist in form of cooperatives, common initiative groups, associations or unlegalised groups. There are groups that work only on honey and there are many other groups that practice mixed farming carryout activities that involve other aspects of agriculture like crop production, piggery, poultry, etc. The Sub Delegation of MINEPIA for Oku has been identifying bee farmers, organizing them into groups of CIGs, Cooperatives, Union and federations. MINEPIA-Oku has organized some seminars and trainings for bee farmers. It was not clear the number of beehives in the forest but there is more than 7000. It was clear too that there are many colonized and uncolonised (without bees) beehives in the forest with some of them (colonized and uncolonised) abandoned. Some groups like Oku Honey Cooperative Society (OHCS) have organized trainings for their members and for other groups and person interested in bee farming. Some other persons and groups depend on training offered by other groups or organizations to build their skills. Some groups offer practical training on beehive construction to their members. OHCS provide prepayment to honey and honey products to farmers. Equipment and containers are made available to their members without a fee. OHCS has 301 members (with 290 males and 11 females). This is the most organized, largest and oldest honey production, processing and marketing group in Oku. It was difficult to know the number of beehives in the forest because members have individual beehives which they harvest and only bring harvested honey to their groups. Netherlands Development Cooperation (SNV), Guiding Hope, Bees for Development, BERUDEP, Apiculture and Nature Conservation Organisation (ANCO), Ghana Wildlife and Apiculture and other organizations have worked to develop apiculture in Oku.

### 3.3 Bee farming data analysis

#### FOREST MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS

7 questionnaires were given to the 7 leaders of the FMIs in Oku.

#### What is the FMIs doing to promote honey production in Oku?

Planting of bee loving trees	Creating environmental awareness	Protection of forest from destruction
Prevent fire outbreak in forest	Training community members on bee farming	Patrols in forest

#### What is the contribution of honey in the wellbeing of the Oku People?

Raise money for bee farmers	Oku is known worldwide for her white honey	Honey production protect the forest
Honey is known for its medicinal	Honey was formerly exchanged by Oku people for palm oil with Nkambe natives	Honey production is a source of employment

#### TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

6 questionnaires were administered to 6 traditional leaders in Oku.

#### How does the palace organize a typical tree planting campaign?

Various opinions were given here by the different traditional authorities

The Quifon organize tree planting by making announcement on market day	Tree planting announce to community by Oku Community radio to mobilize community members	The traditional authorities instruct FMIs to regenerate the forest
Tree planting announce to community by town criers to mobilize community members	Palace attendance plant trees in secret forest	

#### What is the palace doing to promote honey production in Oku?

Planting of bee loving trees	Encouraging bee keeping	Protection of forest from destruction
Prevent fire outbreak in forest	Training community members on bee farming	Encouraging the setting of private forest around homes

#### What is the contribution of honey in the wellbeing of the Oku People?

Source of income for education, health, etc	Honey is known for its medicinal	Honey production protect the forest
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## ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES

The questionnaires of all services of the administration (D.O, Councils, MINEPIA and MINFOF) are analysed as a block,

6 questionnaires were given to the 6 administrative leaders in Oku.

### What is the administration doing to promote honey production in Oku?

Planting of bee loving trees	Creating awareness for population to engage in bee farming-Council	Protection of forest from destruction through conservation methods
Prevent fire outbreak in forest	Financial support to some bee farmers-Council	Organise honey producers into groups-MINEPIA

## SCHOOLS

12 questionnaires were distributed to 12 schools to gather information. The following information was gathered

Question	Yes	No	No response
Are you interested in bee farming as a school?	12	0	0
Are you currently involved in bee farming?	0	12	0

## CHURCHES

7 questionnaires were shared to 7 churches to gather information. The following information was gathered:

Question	Yes	No	No response
Is the church involved in honey production?	0	7	0
Do you encourage members of your church to involve in natural resource management (bee farming and tree planting)?	6	1	0

## COMMON INITIATIVE GROUPS

15 questionnaires were given to 15 Common Initiative Groups in Oku..

Question	Yes	No	No response
Do you provide credit to your members?	11	4	0
Do you encourage your members to engage in forest regeneration?	14	0	1
As a group do you engage in forest regeneration?	11	3	1

### 3.4 Quantity of honey produced

The real amount of honey produced in Oku annually is not known but through the studies we carried out we got this data. This is not all as we could not identify all honey producers.

#### Quantity of Oku White Honey produced and sold annually (2011) per group

Group producing honey	Amount produced annually	Amount sold annually
Oku Honey Cooperative Society	8671 L	7337 L
Oku Pure Refined Honey Group	600 L	500 L
Oku Bee Farmers Association	2001 L	2001 L
Mboh Bee Farmers Group	1333 L	1200 L
Jikijem Zonal Bee Keepers' Group	1387 L	693 L
Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Protection-GROUP-SUSA	20 L	Home consumption
Ets Sammy Sammy Mixed Farming CIG	1334 L	1000L
Oku Cultural and Touristic Centre	450 L	270 L
Oku Forest Honey	1400 L	1350 L
Ndang Bee Farmers Group	630L	630L
Kilum Bee Farmers	600L	580L
Individual production of 20 persons interviewed	1186 L	780 L
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19612 L</b>	<b>16341 L</b>

The amount of honey produced is more than the amount of honey sold because part of the honey produced is for household consumption and some of the honey was not sold because of lack of a market. Studies carried out showed that only people above 35 years involve in bee farming and very few women (less than 10%) are involved. Everyone involved in honey production see the need for product quality maintenance. They said to maintain good honey quality the following needs to be done:

- Use of good honey harvesting method;
- Keep beehives at good flowering areas;
- Separate white honey from yellow honey during harvesting;
- Separate the empty combs from honey combs during harvesting;
- Harvest only ripped combs;
- Construct quality beehives;
- Train bee farmers on how to produce and process honey

The Oku Honey Cooperative Society ensure honey quality by examining and testing honey with refractometer before collecting or buying from members to ensure that moisture content is low.

### 3.5 Honey marketing and processing

Members of organized groups harvest and bring their honey together where it is processed and common market is identified to sell their products and end products. Money gotten is shared proportionately. Some organization like the Oku Honey Cooperative Society buy honey upfront from their members and transport their produce from farm to store. After selling produce, the profit is shared to members. Oku

Honey Cooperative Society produce honey respecting standards of hygiene and sanitation, package and label it before sending to the market. Individuals and some groups harvest honey and either sell directly or process it too. Some of them do package and label their product before marketing. CAMGEW could see some labels on honey sold like Oku Forest Honey with a site for marketing in the Oku Main Market. There is advancement in the organization of bee farmers. Considering that most of the groups are not formally organized prepayment for honey is done on trust, in some cases it is done with short interval of reimbursement and in others it is done to committed members of the group. Groups like the Oku Honey Cooperative Society have established authentic (agreement) forms that facilitate payment with clearly defined rules and obligations. There is a big market for honey locally, nationally and internationally. Oku white honey is being processed to become a Geographical Indication Product since it is more peculiar to this area. The certification process is already at the national level.

### **3.6 Colonisation of beehives**

Information gathered show that beehive colonization is not an easy task in Oku. A suitable beehive for Oku is the local beehives because the Kenyan top bar do not do well in the forest. When beehives are constructed, they are carried to Mbam (some 14Km motorable distance from Oku) and Noni (some 17m or more distance from Oku) hot areas where they are mounted mostly around valleys with streams for colonization to occur. The rate of beehive colonization varies but is never 100%. Colonisation is good from October to May each year in these areas. The forest is so cold and colonization of beehives in the forest is very low but could occur on less than 10% when there is flowering of forest trees and there is honey harvesting in April and May. During this period some hives abscond (bees leave hives) and move to hot areas or could at a low rate colonise other beehives without bees (that most have absconded too) in the forest. Beehives abscond sometimes because of poor honey harvesting or unfavourable environment. When colonization takes place and the bee colony has grown big and stable, the beehive is transported to the forest. The bee entrance to the hive is blocked and in most cases is carried on the head to the Oku forest. Presently, some people now transport the colonized beehives in cars and the movement is gentle. Colonised beehives are taken to the forest between November and ending March when there is flowering of forest trees. The transportation of colonized beehives is done late in the evening after 5pm to be sure that most of the bee workers that went to search for nectar and pollen must have returned to the hive. The placement of the beehive on the head or in the car is done to keep the hive in the same position as they were mounted not to disturb or harm the combs. The hive is mounted in the forest before the early hours of the next morning. Considering too that the Kenyan top bar is made of plank and is heavy it become difficult for people to carry on the head and move long distances.

### **3.7 Conflicts, their prevention and resolution on bee farming**

To prevent conflicts in organized structures like Oku Honey Cooperative Society, members and staff are made to know their duties and responsibilities. Discipline is reinforced. The common conflict that arises is that between bee farmers and grazers when goats in the forest push down beehives. This is always resolved amicably.

### **3.7 Suggestions and Recommendations for honey production**

The following suggestions and recommendations were made by stakeholders in the Oku honey sector to help promote honey production, processing and marketing:

- The government needs to set standards on the bee keeping, honey harvesting and processing procedures in Cameroon;
- The government needs also to organize the marketing of honey;

- There is need to train more groups and people especially the youths on bee farming and honey processing. This will create jobs and increase food production;
- Bee farming equipment and materials needs to be made available, accessible and affordable to bee farmers. It is difficult to have access to this equipment and materials and even when they are available they are expensive;
- Provide financial support in form of loans, grants and subsidies to bee farmers;
- Planting of more bee loving trees in the forest and
- Protect the forest that has bee loving trees from bushfire and illegal exploitation of forest resources

#### **4.0 Linking bee farming and forest conservation to education in Schools**

Forest degradation was acknowledged by schools to be a reality in Oku Community forest. Schools saw the need to participate in the management of the forest. Schools said through their participation in bee farming and forest protection a good environmental education programme could be developed. This environmental education programme can give children the opportunity to know the problems faced by the forest, the importance of the forest and the way to solve these problems. Environmental education will be thought on the role of useful insects like bees in honey production and pollination, forest as a source of food like honey, forest as a source of medicine and how Oku honey is considered medicinal due to the rich medicinal plants in the forest. Schools think that through their participation, children will develop a special love for the forest as they grow up and will live in harmony with nature. Schools also saw the role of children involved in the adapted environmental education to suit local realities in changing behaviours of their parents and communities on forest related malpractices.

Schools recognized the role of bee farming as a source of income for them and also good for developing environmental education, handiwork lessons on how to make bee hives and mathematics on how to calculate the money raised from honey produced. Schools said money raised from the sell of honey will be used to buy school didactic materials, pay salaries of teachers employed by Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), for school construction and buying of school furniture. Schools also recognized that through their involvement in bee farming they will help children learn the following:

- Arts/craft during handiwork period when producing beehives;
- Measurement and income calculation from honey produce (mathematics) when measuring harvested honey and calculating the income expected from the sell of the honey;
- Learn management when proposing what to do with money especially looking at scale of preference.

Schools did see the importance of bee farming as a way of preserving the Oku forest for ownership of beehives in the forest can prevent the setting of bushfire and/or felling of trees in the forest. Teachers said the skills on bee farming will not only help the schools but will also help them personally as they will be able to engage in bee farming as an activity that can generate income. Schools said bee farming is a life skill training and that involving children in bee farming is training them on an activity which is a source of income that they could engage in presently or in the future to raise money and fight unemployment.

#### **5.0 Involvement of churches in bee farming and forest management**

Churches and religious groups in Oku that we contacted did recognize that forest degradation was a problem in Oku community forest. They saw the need to take part in its management through participation in bee farming activities which is also a source of income that could improve on the revenue of the churches and religious groups.

## Challenges

- CAMGEW was unable to get concrete statistics on the number of trees planted in the forest for the past three years despite all efforts made to contact institutions that could have this statistics. Institutions that did the tree planting never had the statistics;
- Some people involve in bee farming are not found in groups and it was difficult to identify all bee farmers. This makes statistics provided on quantity of honey produced and the number of bee farmers less than the reality;
- It was also difficult to know the number of bee hives found in the forest because institutions that work with bee farmers get but the quantity of honey produced and have little idea on the number of hives own by their members in the forest;
- Stakeholders in the forestry sector in Oku gave us information separately but never demonstrated to us that they work as a team to protect the Oku Community Forest. This was the case of the FMIs and the various authorities

## CONCLUSION

Based on baseline studies carried out, much needs to be done to conserve the Oku Community Forest. Bushfires needs to be prevented from getting into the forest and more trees planted to promote forest regeneration in areas that have suffered from bushfire and over exploitation of forest resources. Trees that should be planted in the forest needs to be those that can conserve the forest, are bee loving and watershed protecting. These trees will serve many purposes. Planted trees needs to be followed-up and more patrols done in the forest to prevent forest destruction. The stakeholders in the forestry sector needs to come together to resolve their differences and continue working as one to better protect the forest.

The honey market needs to be organized and honey producers organized into groups. There is need to train more community members on bee farming and engage them in bee keeping. Bee farmers need to take part in the planting of bee loving trees. This activity will prevent them from setting fire in the forest and in preventing the forest from bushfire because of fear that their bee hives will be consumed by fire. This will go a long way to conserve the forest and fight poverty.



## **CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT WATCH (CAMGEW)**

*Authorisation N°.000998/RDA/J06/BAPP*

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### **Questionnaire for Oku Council**

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) is a non profit that works locally and thinks globally, integrating gender in solving environmental problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW is developing a native tree nursery for the restoration of the Oku Community Forest. She is training groups and schools on bee farming and they will later on benefit from subsidise beehives. We need this information purposely for baseline study and to see how we can better serve you and your community.

- 1 Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?      Yes       No 
  - a) If yes, how is your council managing it?
  
- 2 Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?      Yes       No 
  - a) If yes, how is the council supporting it?
  
  - b) If no, is the council ready to support a forest rehabilitation project in Oku?      Yes       No
- 3 In your opinion which parts of the forest needs rehabilitation?
  
- 4 What types of trees have been earmarked for forest rehabilitation by the council?
  
- 5 How does the council organize a typical tree planting campaign?

- 6 Can you provide us with your tree planting statistics for the past 3 years?
- 7 How is the post planting monitoring done?
- 8 Is the council receiving funds for her tree planting programme? Yes  No   
If yes, from who?
- 9 What are you doing about the invasive forest trees in your council area?
- 10 What is the situation of non timber product exploitation in Oku especially medicinal plants?
- 11 What working relationship do you have with Community Forest Management Institutions and how many are they?
- 12 What is the relationship between the council and MINFOF regarding Oku forest management?
- 13 What is the council doing to promote honey production in Oku?
- 14 Are there conflicts resulting from the management of forest resources in your area?  
Yes  No   
a) If yes, what is their nature and what is your council doing to resolve them?  
  
b) If no, what is your council doing to prevent them?

15 Name of Mayor and contact information

16 Sex of person    Male     Female

## **Questionnaire for Forest Management Institutions (FMIs)-Oku**

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17 Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?            Yes     No

    If yes, how is the Forest Management Institutions managing it?

18 Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?    Yes     No

    a) If yes, how is the Forest Management Institutions supporting it?

    b) If no, is the Forest Management Institutions ready to support a forest rehabilitation project in Oku?    Yes     No

19 In your opinion which parts of the forest needs rehabilitation?

20 What types of trees have been earmarked for forest rehabilitation by the FMIs?

21 What is your FMIs doing to conserve the forest in your community?

22 How do the FMIs organize a typical tree planting campaign?

23 Can you provide us with your tree planting statistics for the past 3 years?

24 How is the post-planting monitoring done?

25 Is the FMIs receiving funds for her tree planting programmes ?    Yes     No

If yes, from who?

26 What working relationship do you have with the council?

27 What place does the forest occupy in the culture of the Oku people?

28 What is the situation of non timber forest product exploitation in your community especially honey and medicinal plants?

29 What is your FMI doing to promote honey production in Oku?

30 What is the contribution of honey in the wellbeing of the Oku people?

31 Are there conflicts that arise from the distribution of the revenue from forest products?

Yes     No

a) If yes, how are such conflicts manage?

b) If no, what strategies have been put in place to prevent such conflicts from arising?

## Questionnaire for Oku MINFOF and MINEPIA

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32 Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?            Yes     No

- If yes, how is the Delegation handling it?

33 Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?            Yes     No

a) If yes, how is your Delegation supporting it?

b) If no, is your Delegation ready to support a forest rehabilitation project in Oku?

Yes     No

34 In your opinion which parts of the forest needs rehabilitation?

35 What types of trees have been earmarked for forest rehabilitation by your delegation?

36 What are you doing about the invasive forest trees in your area?

37 What is the situation of Non Timber Product exploitation in Oku such as honey and/or medicinal plants?

38 What working relationship does your Delegation have with honey producers in Oku?

39 How many honey producers are there in Oku?

40 How many beehives are in the forest?

41 Is there a network of honey producers in Oku?      Yes       No

42 What strategy has your Delegation put in place to support the honey producers?

43 What are the statistics of ownership of beehives in the forest disaggregated by age and sex?

44 Are there conflicts resulting from the management of forest resources in your area?

Yes       No

a) If yes, what is their nature and what is your delegation doing to resolve them?

b) If no, what is your Delegation doing to prevent them?

## **Questionnaire for Traditional Authorities-Oku**

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) is a non profit that works locally and thinks globally, integrating gender in solving environmental problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW is developing a native tree nursery for the restoration of the Oku Community Forest. She is training groups and schools on bee farming and they will later on benefit from subsidise beehives. We need this information purposely for baseline study and to see how we can better serve you and your community.

45 Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?      Yes       No

46 If yes, how is the palace managing it?

47 Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?      Yes       No

48 If yes, how is the palace supporting it?

49 If no, is the palace ready to support a forest rehabilitation project in Oku?

Yes       No

50 In your opinion which parts of the forest needs rehabilitation?

51 What is the palace doing to conserve the forest in Oku?

52 What types of trees have been earmarked for forest rehabilitation by the palace?

53 How does the palace organize a typical tree planting campaign?

54 Can you provide us with your tree planting statistics for the past 3 years?

55 How is the post planting monitoring done?

56 Is the palace receiving funds for her tree planting programmes?      Yes       No

57 If yes, from who?

- 58 What are you doing about the invasive forest trees in your area?
- 59 What working relationship do you have with Community Forest Management Institutions?
- 60 What place does the forest occupy in the culture of the Oku people?
- 61 What is the relationship between the palace, council and MINFOF with regards to forest management?
- 62 What is the situation of non timber wood product exploitation in Oku especially honey and/or medicinal plants?
- 63 What is the palace doing to promote honey production in Oku?
- 64 What is the contribution of honey in the wellbeing of her people?
- 65 What is the participation rate of men, women and youths in natural resource management (honey production and tree planting)?
- 66 Are there conflicts resulting from the management of forest resources in your fendom?

Yes  No

a) If yes, what is their nature and what is your palace doing to resolve them?

b) If no, what is your palace doing to prevent them?

## Questionnaire for Divisional Officer-Oku

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) is a non profit that works locally and thinks globally, integrating gender in solving environmental problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW is developing a native tree nursery for the restoration of the Oku Community Forest. She is training groups and schools on bee farming and they will later on benefit from subsidise beehives. We need this information purposely for baseline study and to see how we can better serve you and your community.

67 Is forest degradation a problem in Oku? Yes  No

- If yes, how is the Delegation handling it?

68 Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku? Yes  No

a) If yes, how is your Delegation supporting it?

b) If no, is your Delegation ready to support a forest rehabilitation project in Oku?

Yes  No

69 In your opinion which parts of the forest needs rehabilitation?

70 What types of trees have been earmarked for forest rehabilitation by your delegation?

71 What are you doing about the invasive forest trees in your area?

72 What is the situation of Non Timber Product exploitation in Oku such as honey and/or medicinal plants?

73 What working relationship does your Delegation have with honey producers in Oku?

74 How many honey producers are there in Oku?

75 How many beehives are in the forest?

76 Is there a network of honey producers in Oku?      Yes       No

77 What strategy has your Delegation put in place to support the honey producers?

78 What are the statistics of ownership of beehives in the forest disaggregated by age and sex?

79 Are there conflicts resulting from the management of forest resources in your area?

Yes       No

a) If yes, what is their nature and what is your delegation doing to resolve them?

b) If no, what is your Delegation doing to prevent them?

## Questionnaire for Traditional Authorities-Oku

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) is a non profit that works locally and thinks globally, integrating gender in solving environmental problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW is developing a native tree nursery for the restoration of the Oku Community Forest. She is training groups and schools on bee farming and they will later on benefit from subsidise beehives. We need this information purposely for baseline study and to see how we can better serve you and your community.

80 Is forest degradation a problem in Oku?            Yes             No

81 If yes, how is the palace managing it?

82 Is there any forest regeneration project in Oku?            Yes             No

83 If yes, how is the palace supporting it?

84 If no, is the palace ready to support a forest rehabilitation project in Oku?

Yes             No

85 In your opinion which parts of the forest needs rehabilitation?

86 What is the palace doing to conserve the forest in Oku?

87 What types of trees have been earmarked for forest rehabilitation by the palace?

88 How does the palace organize a typical tree planting campaign?

89 Can you provide us with your tree planting statistics for the past 3 years?

90 How is the post planting monitoring done?

91 Is the palace receiving funds for her tree planting programmes? Yes  No

92 If yes, from who?

93 What are you doing about the invasive forest trees in your area?

94 What working relationship do you have with Community Forest Management Institutions?

95 What place does the forest occupy in the culture of the Oku people?

96 What is the relationship between the palace, council and MINFOF with regards to forest management?

97 What is the situation of non timber wood product exploitation in Oku especially honey and/or medicinal plants?

98 What is the palace doing to promote honey production in Oku?

99 What is the contribution of honey in the wellbeing of her people?

100 What is the participation rate of men, women and youths in natural resource management (honey production and tree planting)?

101 Are there conflicts resulting from the management of forest resources in your fendom?

Yes  No

a) If yes, what is their nature and what is your palace doing to resolve them?

b) If no, what is your palace doing to prevent them?

## **Questionnaire for Common Initiative Groups in Oku**

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1) What is your main objective?

2) What is your target population?

3) How many members do you have disaggregated by sex and age?

4) What quantity of honey do you produce annually?

- 5) What quantity of honey do you sell annually?
- 6) What is the net worth of the honey market in Oku?
- 7) How do your members benefit from your activities?
- 8) How are your members remunerated?
- 9) Do you provide credit to your members?      Yes       No 
  - a) If yes, how is this handle?
  - b) If no, how do you manage your membership?
- 10) How many beehives do you have in Oku?
- 11) How do you train your members in bee farming?
- 12) How do you ensure product quality?
- 13) At what stage of the certification process are you with Oku White honey?
- 14) What kind of relationship do you have with the relevant administrative delegations in Oku?
- 15) What is your relationship with the palace?

16) How do you market your products and what suggestion do you have to make concerning the honey market?

17) What recommendations can you give to improve honey production in Oku?

18) What is the relationship between honey production and environment protection?

19) Do you encourage your members to engage in forest regeneration? Yes  No

20) As a group do you engage in forest regeneration? Yes  No

21) Name of CIG and contact information

22) Sex of person    Male     Female

## **Questionnaire for individuals in Oku**

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23) What is your main objective?

24) What is your target population?

25) How many members do you have disaggregated by sex and age?

26) What quantity of honey do you produce annually?

27) What quantity of honey do you sell annually?

28) What is the net worth of the honey market in Oku?

29) How do your members benefit from your activities?

30) How are your members remunerated?

31) Do you provide credit to your members?      Yes       No

a) If yes, how is this handle?

b) If no, how do you manage your membership?

32) How many beehives do you have in Oku?

33) How do you train your members in bee farming?

34) How do you ensure product quality?

35) At what stage of the certification process are you with Oku White honey?

36) What kind of relationship do you have with the relevant administrative delegations in Oku?

37) What is your relationship with the palace?

38) How do you market your products and what suggestion do you have to make concerning the honey market?

39) What recommendations can you give to improve honey production in Oku?

40) What is the relationship between honey production and environment protection?

41) Do you encourage your members to engage in forest regeneration? Yes  No

42) As a group do you engage in forest regeneration? Yes  No

43) Name of person and contact information

44) Sex of person    Male     Female

## **Questionnaire for Churches**

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1. What is the role of the church in forest management?

2. Is your church involved in honey production?    Yes     No

a) If yes, how?

b) If no, why?

3. Do you encourage your members to get involve in natural resource management (bee farming and tree planting)?      Yes       No
4. What is your suggestion to improve the living conditions of your members

### **Questionnaire for Schools in Oku**

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1) Are you interested in bee farming as a school?      Yes       No

2) Are you currently involved in bee farming?    Yes     No

If yes, how many beehives can you conveniently manage?

3) How will you link bee farming to your educational programmes?

4) How will the produce be managed for the interest of the school?

