

Impact of SNV Highlands Organised Training to Beekeepers in the South West under project GCP/RAF/408/EC

Under project GCP/RAF/408/EC, seven major beekeeping organisations have been trained in the South West Province of Cameroon by the SNV Highlands (ERUDEF, SOWEBEFU, TOBA, FAAFNET, BOBEEFAG, BDC and CERUT). These workshops and follow-up advisory services have helped beekeepers in the province to become more organised.

At the level of **ERUDEF**, this is yielding fruits in that due to sensitisation carried out by ERUDEF a group of hunters and trappers “The Lebialem Hunters Bee Farmers” are opting out of hunting game to starting beekeeping activities as an alternative livelihoods activity.

SOWEBEFU Fako Chapters in Buea and Muyuka have been quite instrumental in the formation of the South West Union of Bee Farmers. At the moment they are in the process of creating divisional chapters of Bee farmers.

TOBA has also benefitted from SNV organised training and are quite active in the distribution to its members of melliferous plants such as caliantra terminalia, bottle brush, neem plants and a variety of locally identified plants.

FAAFNET has also been present at SNV organised trainings and has continued with the training of individual groups of beekeepers around Fako. Women are very much involved in their activities and they have been encouraged to continue in this spirit.

Another group that has revitalized its activities is **BOBEEFAG**. When we visited them last year with the project coordinator there were no activities going on. But they have started work at their beautiful western style apiary once more. Because of project GCP/RAF/408/EC visits, phone calls and advice and encouragement. At the moment their honey (bottled and labelled) is being sold here in the GTZ office. They also brought samples of honey, wax and propolis to our Buea office.

BDC Limbe was another group that received training from project SNV Highlands under project GCP/RAF/408/EC. They have now come up with new packages and labels and are at the moment looking for new markets for their products.

Conclusion

In conclusion one can say that project GCP/RAF/408/EC activities have positively impacted on the lives of beekeepers in the South West. However, the sector is characteristic of some problems which include: Low honey production; many beekeepers still work in isolation; absence of basic inputs, little mastery of processing, labeling and packaging techniques; little knowledge of advanced beekeeping techniques (bee multiplication, queen rearing, production of royal jelly/pollen/propolis); Inadequate bee fodder due to the absence of melliferous plants

This notwithstanding, a lot of awareness has been created, expectations raised and beekeepers are more willing to work with the project team in improving their livelihoods and attaining project goals in the same vein.

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