

Evaluation of the impacts of participatory forestry on means of sustainable livelihood, behaviour and socio-economic status of users and forestry management in the Niger

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SUMMARY

The Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world. More than 90 percent of its population lives in rural areas and largely depends on the exploitation of scarce forest resources for its livelihood. Forest resources provide an income that helps the population to survive during periods of food shortages, as well as providing for the most pressing needs. As part of the decentralization process in the management of natural resources, the state has introduced a new policy. This empowers village communities that have forests to exploit, transport and trade in the wood used for energy in rural markets. Ten years after the establishment of the new policy, forest resources have generated substantial revenues in some regions of the country, totalling CFAF 1 million. Village populations have undertaken many local initiatives to invest these funds in social and economic development in their communities and in the sustainable management of forests. These actions, which often result from spontaneous and free decision-making by villagers, need to be encouraged and extended to the rest of the country.

