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## **Multiple dimensions and roles of Non-Wood Forest Products within bioeconomy: examples from Northern and Southern perspectives**

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### **Abstract**

Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) make an important contribution to livelihoods, diets, and recreation for people across the world. Particularly in developing countries, NWFPs are essential for subsistence as nutritionally relevant foods, source of medicines, energy, and construction materials. Moreover, their commercialization also provides earnings for cash-constrained households. NWFPs are important items also in western societies, where they can be found as key ingredients in a surprising number of food and medicinal products. Moreover, many still directly collect NWFPs for self-consumption, for leisure, and for trade.

This paper presents results on the roles played by NWFPs in developing and developed countries. On the one hand it provides insights from research conducted in select forest and non-forest communities in two African countries (Uganda and Zambia), demonstrating their role in providing important nutrients year-round, as well as their potential to form the basis of sustainable, economically viable and nutrition-sensitive value chains. On the other, it presents the results of a survey conducted on a large panel of European households (17,000 respondents), revealing that about 90% of these consume NWFPs at least once per year and a surprisingly high share, almost 25%, harvest NWFPs. Moreover, data from two European case-studies illustrate how NWFPs harvesting can originate recreational opportunities and earnings in rural areas.

While research results in the different contexts are not directly comparable due to different methods and scale of application, they provide useful insights on the versatile role of NWFPs under different conditions, development stages and aspects of the bioeconomy.