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*Origin Products from Kenyan Forests: A Pathway to Prosperity or Green Inclusive Growth?*

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Many tropical countries have untapped potential for harvesting market value using geographical indications (GI) for unique origin products (OPs), including OPs from forests - in the same way EU gain billions of Euros annually from agricultural OPs registered with Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) or Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). The VALOR research project builds academic capacity and investigates institutional and field conditions under which producers of African OPs can create added value by incorporating territory specific cultural, environmental and social qualities into production, processing and marketing of unique local products.

Employing case studies of OPs, VALOR investigates prospects for Kenya (Ghana and Tanzania) to leapfrog into exports of OPs, allowing smallholders to build monetary value, while stewarding natural environments and resources. Smallholders – such as Kenyan producers of Kakamega Silk from the African endemic butterflies *Anaphe panda* and *A. infracta* feeding on leaves from the indigenous African multi-purpose tree (*Bridelia micrantha*) - face severe institutional, organizational and value chain constraints that keep their unique products away from valuable niche markets. In contrast, success with OPs (including one Honey) has been achieved in Cameroon.

Kakamega Silk and Mwingi Honey are examples of Kenyan forest origin products included in the portfolio of VALOR case studies. Through interviews with producers, processors, retail representatives, state authorities and a number of other actors in the agricultural value chains, the origin products are investigated for their GI potential and prospects based on market value and reputation, producer collectivism, unique production systems, product properties, processing procedures, the natural and cultural links between the products and their origin, and policies and regulations facilitating or hindering GI recognition, i.e. the framework conditions.

For Mwingi Honey from Kenya, marketed as linking forest biodiversity with sustainable livelihoods, we find a well-functioning producer association with a common processing facility and marketing platform, and a product with a distinguished and nationally highly appreciated quality that can be traced to *Acacia* spp., the thorn tree dominating the local dry woodlands. With high prices for quality honeys in the region and a growing quality-minded consumer segment, export markets are nearby. The main constraints for the GI prospect for the product are found in the institutional framework; a GI draft bill was written in 2011, developed by the Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI), but still awaits enactment; and a national beekeeping policy and a Beekeeping industry Bill that are still in the process of enactment. Once enacted, these instruments will guide the development of a honey monitoring plan in Kenya to enhance the products' traceability, quality and accreditation both at the national and local level. Furthermore, low production of quality honey is also a constraint as even national demand cannot be met. Studies are being carried out for the livelihood impact of the current honey production and outlook towards GI value chains. Similar conditions are found for other origin products in Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana. Getting the framework conditions right can open up a valuable market for small-scale producers of origin products from forests.