



Welcome to the Darwin Initiative Seminar Series!

Day 1: Tuesday 21st April 2026





Session 1: Finance and Market-Based Approaches

Session chaired by: Jo Elliott



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS



Developing a Community Based Ecotourism Model at Lake Natron, Tanzania

Emmanuel Mgimwa
Nature Tanzania / BirdLife International



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

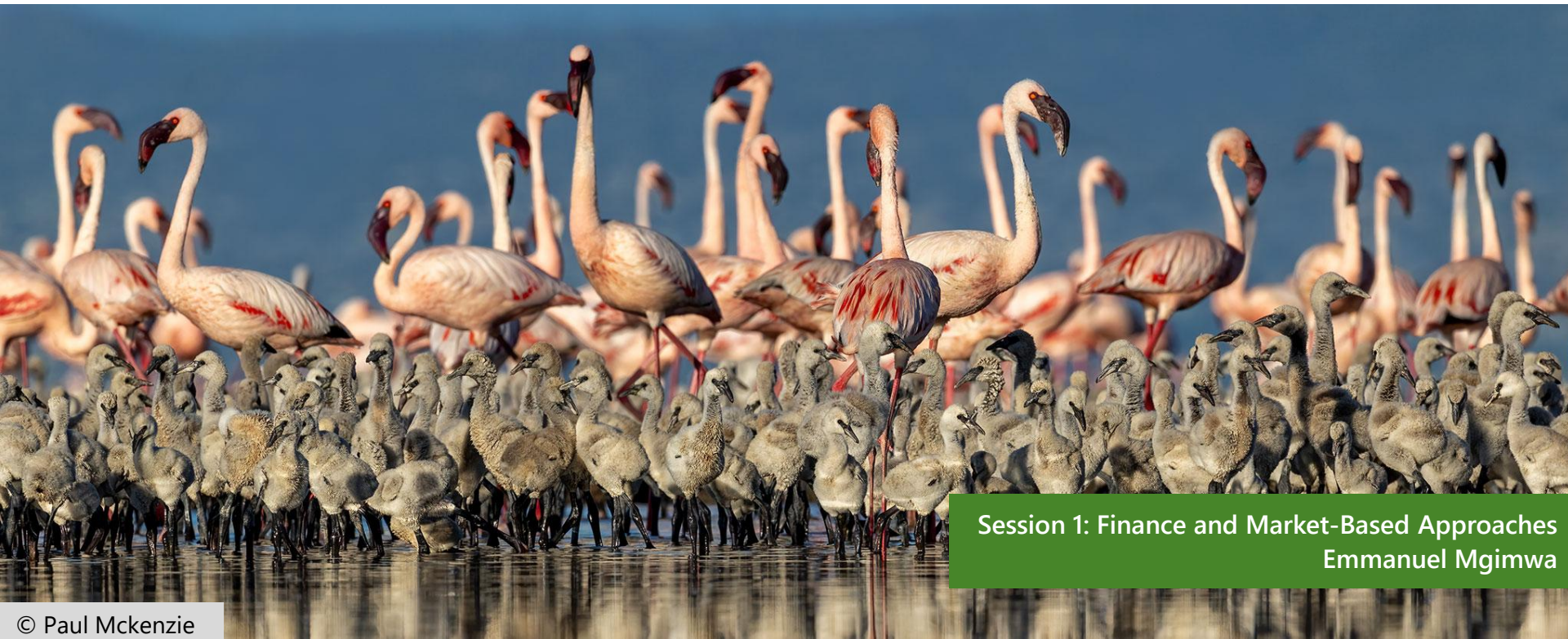


Project Context



Lake Natron Ramsar Site: A globally critical landscape

- The **ONLY** regular breeding site for Lesser Flamingos.
- Supports 75% of the global population (1.5 – 2.5 million birds).
- Previously and currently under threat from soda ash mining.



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The Challenge: Conservation without livelihoods fails



- Poverty and limited income options.
- Weak tourism value chain.
- Wetlands degradation (overgrazing, deforestation).
- Low local benefit from tourism.



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About the Project



Goal and Aim

Enhancing the conservation and protection of Lake Natron Ramsar Site and its unique biodiversity.

Project Goal

Create a community-owned ecotourism model that links the community's financial health to the lake's ecological health.

Period

July 2017 – June 2020.



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Project's Solution (Theory of Change)



Linking markets to conservation

- If communities earn from conservation → they protect ecosystems.
- **Project Focus:** Ecotourism as a market-based incentive.



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Project Implementation & Partnership



- **BirdLife International** – Project lead & coordination.
- **Local Government Authorities:** Policy alignment & support.
- National level: MNRT, VPO, TAWA, TTB.
- **Tourism stakeholders** (tour operators, private sector) – market linkages.
- **Conservation NGOs** – technical support.
- **Community Institutions:** local governance & ownership.
- **Nature Tanzania**

Key Message: “Partnerships connected conservation, communities, and markets.”



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Finance & Market-Based Approach



1. Market Intervention

- Training of local guides, women and entrepreneurs.
- Professionalised tourism value chain.

2. Financial Mechanism

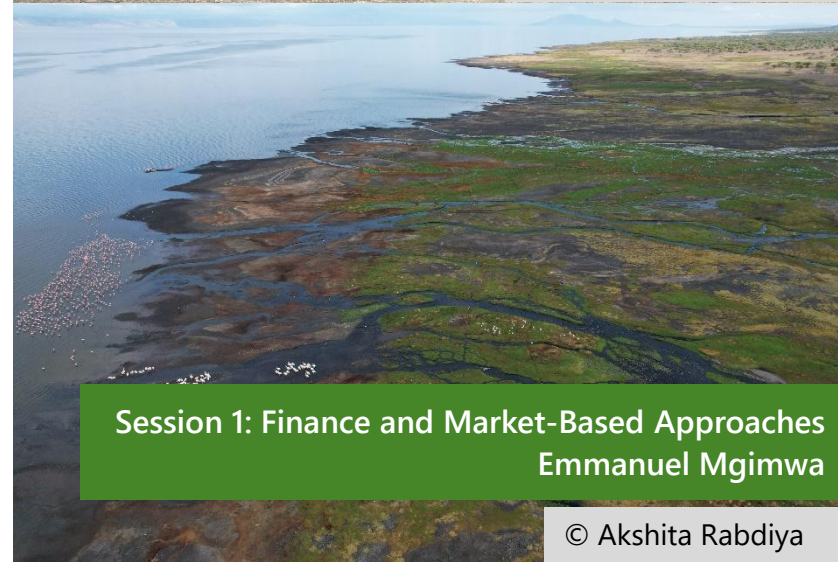
- Locally-owned Community Revolving Fund - (low interest ~5%).

3. Governance

- Tourism Development Plan.
- Catchment Restoration Plan.
- Revenue-sharing system.



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Key Results (Livelihood Impact)



Livelihood Transformation (at the end of the project)

- Tour guiding services improved.
- Market linkages with tour operators.
- 1,038 people benefited.
- Income increases:
 - Women: \$52 → \$72 (+38%)
 - Youth: \$46 → \$75 (+63%)
 - Men: \$31 → \$68 (+176%)



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Conservation Impact



Biodiversity gains through markets

- 10,000 hectares of wetlands protected.
- 7,500 trees planted (68% survival).
- Reduced grazing in sensitive areas (35% → ~15%).



Key Message: "Income reduced pressure on ecosystems"

Women & Market Inclusion



Women as Market Actors

- 757 women benefited.
- 320 women using market booths.
- 66% of Community Revolving Fund (CRF) beneficiaries are women.

Market Diversification: Beyond guiding, women's groups were trained in high-quality handicraft production and entrepreneurship.



Financial Mechanism Success



Community Revolving Fund (CRF)

- 335 beneficiaries (majority women).
- CRF grew by 17% (above 10% target) at the end of the project.
- Continue to support small tourism businesses.
- CRF as of March 2026

Key Message: "Local finance unlocked local entrepreneurship"

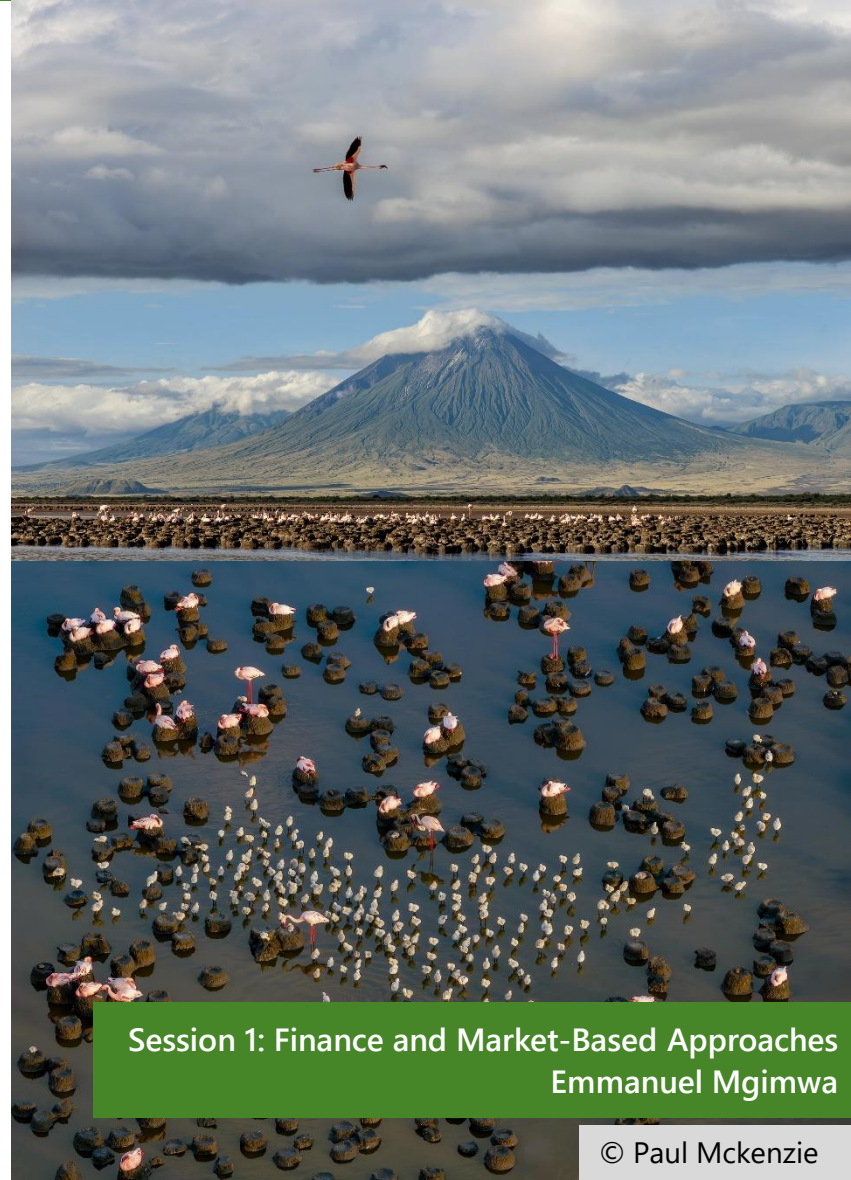


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Lessons Learned



- Equity is essential → benefits must reach many.
- Tourism is volatile → diversify livelihoods.
- Trust = transparency in revenue sharing.
- Community ownership > external control.
- Managing over-expectation



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Scaling and Legacy



From Pilot to Replication

- Model adopted by government & stakeholders.
- Strong local ownership (from BirdLife to Nature Tanzania to local Community-Based Organisations).
- CRF model replicated to:
 - East Usambara Mountains
 - Makao WMA
 - Soon to Malagarasi-Muyovozi Ramsar Site

Ongoing initiatives



- Advocacy work against the proposed soda ash mining.
- Waterbird monitoring and capacity building.
- CRF implementation – expanded to Magadini village.

Financial support:

- BirdLife International
- Ecosystem Restoration Fund
- Greenlife Line Action Fund (IUCN NL)
- Jeff Blumberg (UK)



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Final Message



“Community-based ecotourism can deliver conservation—if markets are inclusive, transparent, and locally owned.”



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Thanks for listening!



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NTFP micro-enterprises for competitive forests and livelihoods in Ethiopia

Matthew Snell
University of Huddersfield



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Rationale (i)



- Biodiversity hotspot; multidimensional rural poverty.
- Deforestation – conversion to agriculture.
- Tenure insecurity, limited forest income, population growth, investors, in-migration, culture change.
- Successful initiatives on wild and forest coffee through coops, but only 25,000ha (25%) of geographic locations grow coffee and male dominated.

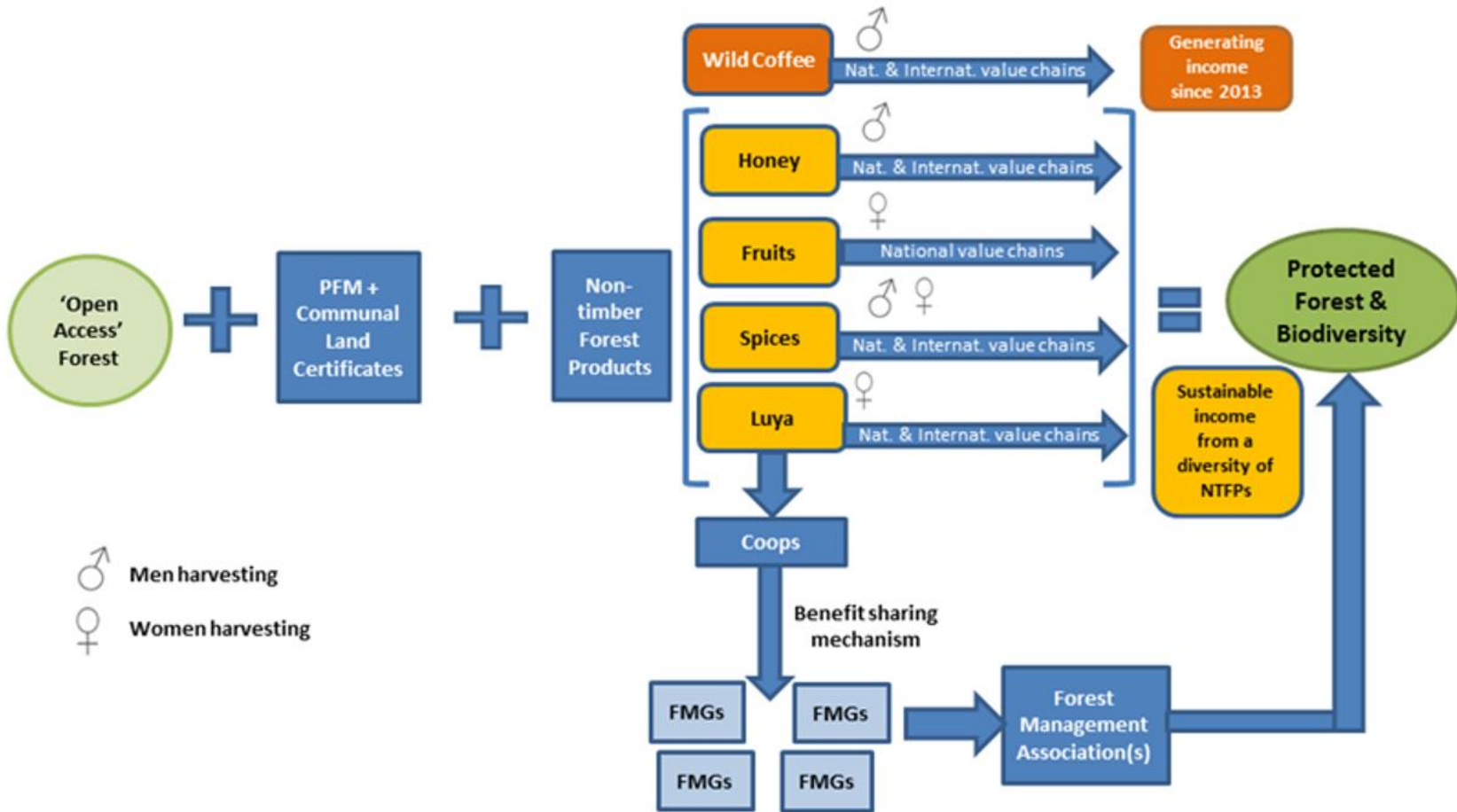


Rationale (ii)

- Distance between coops and many kebeles.
- Lack of opportunities for women.
- Success of honey development in other districts.
- Anticipated potential to develop value chains for Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs) other than coffee.



Theory of Change – make the forests pay their way



Implementing partners

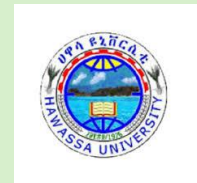


Project partners
& community
MEs

Government
partners

Private sector
partners

University
partners



NTFP 1: Honey

- Traditional and transitional hives: men and women (locally used adaptation).
- Harvest and QA training by apinec (partner).
- Honey quality assessment.
- Store construction – security, visibility, and moisture.
- Offers to purchase by apinec.
- Ultimately, sales to Union as better prices offered.



NTFP 2: Spices

- At least 55 NTFPs, many spices.
- Korerima (Ethiopian cardamom) and timiz (long pepper).
- Post-harvest and QA training.
- Covid-19 transport restrictions.
- Sales at local markets.



NTFP 3: Forest fruits



- Partner (ecopia) training on processing.
- Backyard and forest because of Covid-19 restrictions.
- Varied products – jams and juices, scrubs, creams and soaps.
- Bazaar to showcase and sell products.
- Greater shelf life of non-edible products.
- Unprocessed products much easier to regulate than processed ones.



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NTFP 4: Forest mahogany "Luya"

- Uses: furniture, household implements, edible seeds, drink from cooked arils, body ointment / hair oil, enjera pan, various medicinal uses.
- Analysis undertaken in Ethiopia. UK analysis not achieved despite 18 months of negotiation.
- Results: high oil yield and physiochemical properties consistent with oils used for soap making.
- Simple, manual oil-pressing machines would suffice for local oil extraction.
- Antifungal and antibacterial studies not possible in Ethiopia.



Micro-Enterprise criteria and training



- Understanding, compliance, and time.
- Share harvest info with Government of Ethiopia offices.
- Implement and comply with government rules.
- Target - 51% of members should be women.
- Open to people of every race, religion, and sex.
- Training: Entrepreneurial Mind-set; Analysing Opportunities; Financial analysis.



Female participation in Micro-Enterprises



- 5 honey Micro-Enterprises
 - Female representation 61%.
 - 831 total trainees, 481 comprehensive.
 - Sales of 1,181 kg in first harvest.
 - Second harvest was underway.
- 3 forest fruits Micro-Enterprises
 - Female representation 33%, 336 trainees.
 - All jams and juices sold.
 - 70% future purchase commitment from private sector partner.
- 4 spice Micro-Enterprises
 - Female representation 28-53%.
 - 577 total trainees, 234 comprehensive.
 - Sales of 3,081 kg.
 - Sales to local traders and markets due to Covid-19 transport restrictions.



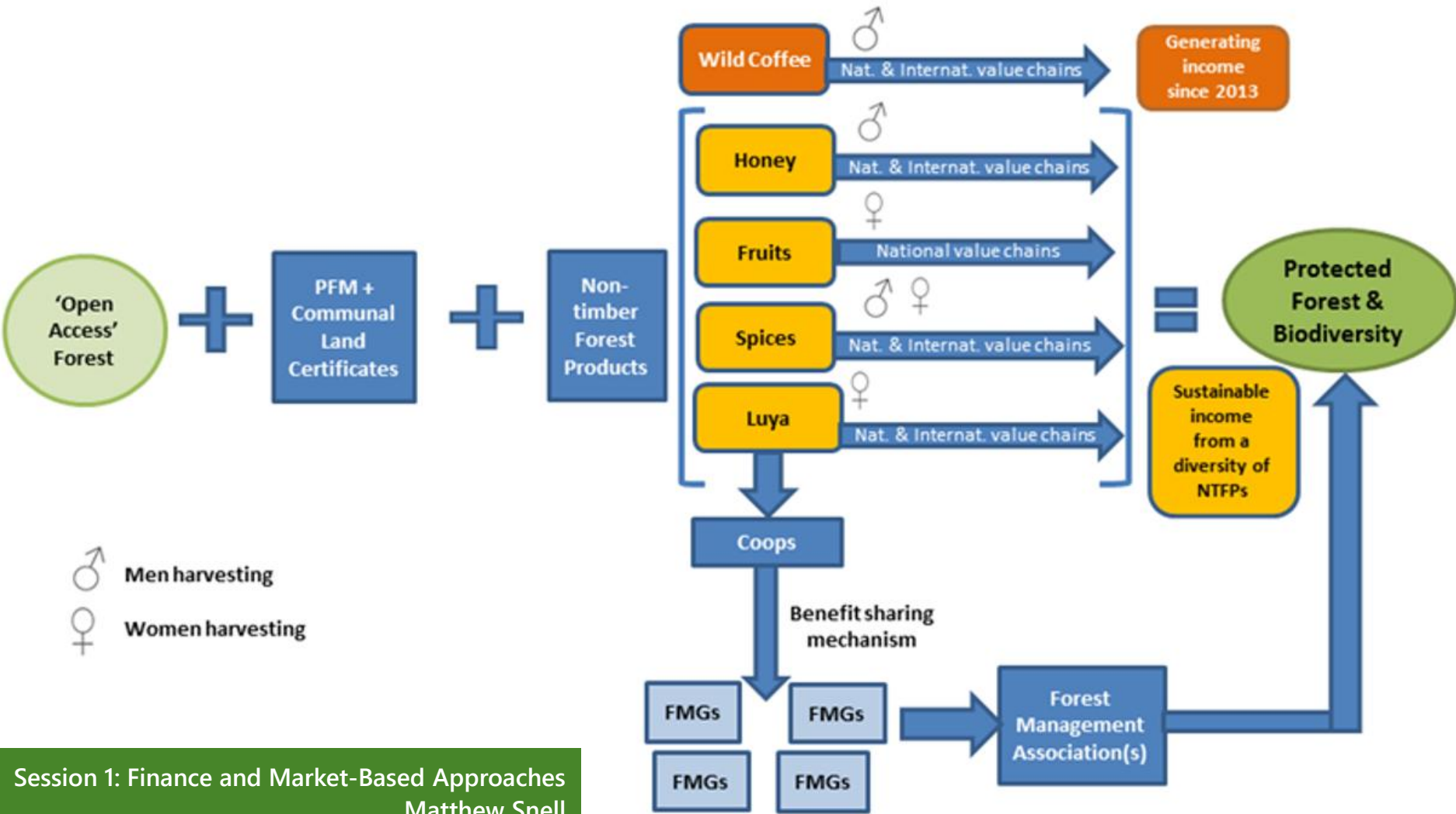
Socio-economic evaluation



Table 5. Price changes due to the project and COVID-19

NTFPs	Before ME	During/Since ME	Since Covid-19	% increase in price between before and after ME (%)
Honey	64.79	126.22	134.58	94.81
Black pepper	79.33	133.89	132.10	68.77
Cardamom	44.56	96.19	85.71	115.89
Coffee	12.00	39.25	0.00	227.08
Ginger	22.40	37.86	37.12	69.01
Luya	7.89	21.44	20.25	171.8
Wild pepper (Mitmita)	25.00	65.00	80.00	160.00
Long pepper (Timiz)	23.33	46.43	33.33	98.98
Turmeric	3.00	4.50	0.00	50.00
Wild coffee	7.00	18.00	18.00	157.14

Theory of Change and findings



Key Lessons



1. Selected NTFP value chain development – a potential way of increasing participation by women and by more marginalised households.
2. NTFP price increases vary and change temporally. Basket of goods approach worthwhile.
3. Harvesting of NTFPs showed no negative effect on forest condition or biodiversity (but small sample).
4. Market access very difficult in remote locations. Transport costs very high. Post-harvest difficult in damp conditions.
5. Raw products require fewer standards than processed ones.
6. Consider processing, shelf lives, and profit margins – soaps, creams, and scrubs more profitable than jams or juices and longer shelf life.

Thanks for listening!



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