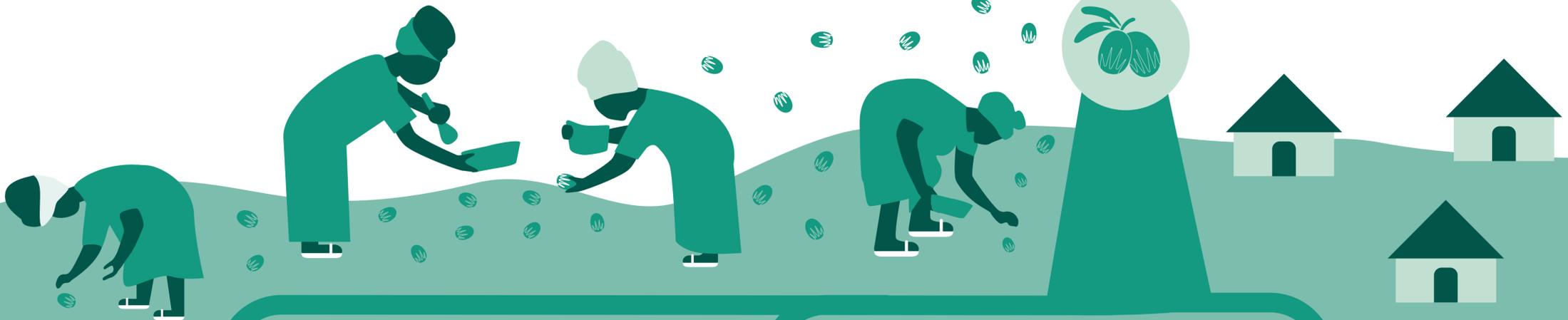


LANDSCAPE OF SHEA

There are an estimated **1.84 billion shea trees** across **23 countries**. More than **18 million women collect the shea fruit**, which has huge economic and cultural value, used to generate income and provide food.



SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Cutting of shea trees for charcoal and clearing for agriculture depletes supply, and increases the risk of wildfires. There is also inadequate research into propagation to increase the stock of trees.

LIVELIHOODS

Shea pickers are often the poorest women (women make up 80% of pickers), who make very little income and are often stigmatised. As a result they lack any negotiating power and are vulnerable to price manipulation by traders.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Pickers start work at dawn and have little to no PPE to protect them against scorpion and snake bites. They are exposed to heat and fire in the parboiling process.

GOVERNANCE

Women often have no long-term land tenure, which resides with men. Within government, policy to protect parklands and trees is often inadequate and poorly enforced. Within companies and government, there is a lack of awareness, as well as a lack of good documentation and legislation, around the responsible sourcing of shea.

INTERVENTIONS TO CREATE POSITIVE IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Stakeholders at all stages of the supply chain need to work together to share information and plan for the ecological sustainability of shea supply across the region, and within a cross-commodity context.

LIVELIHOODS

It is necessary to improve income from shea picking to retain women. Financial security also needs to be provided for the women and community, supporting local industry to maintain the infrastructure around the workers.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Basic health and safety equipment can be provided to protect pickers from the risks associated with their work. As well as ensuring women are not injured in their work, it will help to reduce the stigma attached to such low-paid and dangerous work.

GOVERNANCE

Companies involved in the shea supply chain should use their leverage to influence policy to protect the industry, at both an environmental and social level.

proforest

Proforest supports companies in responsible sourcing of shea including doing risk assessments to identify the social and environmental issues they need to prioritise and manage.