

A baseline study on the types of vegetables grown, production constraints, market access, and use of synthetic pesticides was conducted in the Taita-Hills (Kenya) and Western Usambara (Tanzania), two areas within the Eastern Arc Mountains Conservation Hotspot in April /May 2006. The objective of the study was to collect baseline information that could be used as a basis for the formulation, development and implementation of locale specific integrated pest management (IPM) training programme for small-scale vegetable growers in the areas. The study provided evidence that (1) a wide range of vegetables are grown for sale in urban centers (Mombasa and Voi-Kenya; and Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Zanzibar and Arusha-Tanzania), (2) vegetable production in both project sites are a source of income and therefore contributes to livelihoods for communities living in the environs of conservation forests (3) a wide range of synthetic pesticides are used in vegetable production and therefore a threat to biodiversity conservation efforts, and, (4) Pesticide use is the first option for the majority of vegetable producers, and hence the need for the introduction of IPM as a strategy to reduce the current over reliance on synthetic pesticides. Whereas in Western Usambara some farmer groups have established organized markets, in Taita Hills farmers sells individually to brokers. Based on the information collected, Chawia environmental committee (Taita Hills-Kenya), and, Malindi-Lukozi and Shashui-Soni (Western Usambara- Tanzania) were earmarked for IPM training in the pilot phase of the project starting in July 2006.