

## Support the Nou Forest raffia producer groups

A wide range of attractive and useful raffia products is available for sale from the Nou Forest raffia producers.

### Raffia products from the Nou Forest communities

#### Ugali basket

Used to store ugali (maize) flour while cooking – Price \$10.00

#### Vegetable basket

Used to collect vegetables from the garden – Price \$15.00

#### Big basket

Used to carry crops from the field, store charcoal or clothing – Price \$25.00

#### Medium mat

Rectangular (4ft by 6ft) – Price \$10.00

Round (5ft diameter) – Price \$15.00

#### Big mat

Rectangular (5ft by 6ft) – Price \$25.00

Round (10ft diameter) – Price \$40.00

#### Bed mats

Used for bedding. Rectangular and round mats of any size may be ordered through FARM-Africa Tanzania.



By buying these products, you are helping to conserve the Nou Forest for future generations. You are doing this by directly contributing to the improvement of the livelihoods of forest communities engaged in the sustainable management of the forest.

## For further information on the project and the raffia production initiative, please contact:

FARM-Africa Nou Joint Forest Management Project  
c/o FARM-Africa Tanzania Babati Office  
PO Box 675  
Babati, Manyara Region, Tanzania  
T +255 27 254 1475; F +255 27 253 1476  
E [farmbabati@iwayafrica.com](mailto:farmbabati@iwayafrica.com)

Participatory Forest Management Unit  
FARM-Africa/SOS Sahel Ethiopia  
PO Box 5746  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
T +251 11 416 8483; F +251 11 416 9696  
E [cfwcp@ethionet.et](mailto:cfwcp@ethionet.et); W [www.pfmp-farmsos.org](http://www.pfmp-farmsos.org)

#### For orders:

FARM-Africa Tanzania  
PO Box 15335  
Arusha, Tanzania  
T +255 27 254 8042; F +255 27 254 8041  
E [farmtanzania@iwayafrica.com](mailto:farmtanzania@iwayafrica.com)

FARM-Africa Head Office  
Clifford's Inn, Fetter Lane  
London, EC4A 1BZ, UK  
T +44 (0)20 7430 0440; F +44 (0)20 7430 0460;  
E [farmafrica@farmafrica.org.uk](mailto:farmafrica@farmafrica.org.uk); W [www.farmafrica.org.uk](http://www.farmafrica.org.uk)

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Design: Eileen Higgins E [eileen@eh-design.co.uk](mailto:eileen@eh-design.co.uk)  
Photos: FARM-Africa

## Weaving a Way Forward



## Raffia Products from the Nou Forest

**FARM Africa**  
Making a lasting difference to Africa's families





## Background

FARM-Africa is an international NGO working with poor African farmers, helping them to produce more food for their families so that future generations do not have to depend on handouts of aid. FARM-Africa works in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Southern Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

FARM-Africa Tanzania runs six development programmes including the Nou Joint Forest Management (JFM) Project. The project works with Village Environmental Committees and the Forestry and Beekeeping Division of the Tanzanian Government to develop sustainable forest management plans. The project is part of the regional FARM-Africa/SOS Sahel Ethiopia Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP).

One of the main outputs of the project is to encourage the adoption of complementary natural resource management and Non-Timber Forest Product technologies.

## Project goals

The project aims to reduce poverty and conserve the environment by encouraging correct management of the existing forest resources and promoting sustainable non-timber livelihood options within the forest.

The *Weaving A Way Forward* Raffia Initiative is part of realising the overall goal. The initiative is working with eight villages around the Nou Forest, reaching out to over 160 women.

## Marketing raffia products to improve livelihoods

As part of the livelihood component, the Nou JFM project, supported by the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission and the European Union, has started a one-year initiative aimed at promoting forest raffia products and linking them to markets, thereby improving livelihoods. Community members have been weaving raffia products for many years, mainly for household use.

External demand for quality raffia products has been recognised as a potential income generating activity for some time. However despite the demand and potential, production is constrained by a lack of clearly identified markets, poor pricing, and little capital to invest.

## What is raffia?

Raffia grasses have always been part of the Nou Forest and its use by forest communities has been passed down through generations. The raffia grass grows in and around the Nou Forest, where the conditions – high moisture content and fertile soil – are favourable.

Raffia has been used for centuries by women of the Nou Forest to produce mats and baskets for household use. Now with the support of the Nou JFM project, communities are producing raffia products to generate much-needed income for their families.

## Harvesting raffia sustainably

As part of the conservation of the forest, community members plant raffia along streams and rivers in the forest and in their villages, using seeds and cuttings. Proper weeding is essential to get good raffia growth and reduce damage from insects and mice. Raffia is ready for harvest 7-12 months after planting, depending on the availability of moisture.

Building business skills in the community is at the heart of the initiative. Raffia group members are trained in business development, including how to improve the quality of their products, conduct market research and sell their products.

## Weaving a way forward

### What the raffia groups say

“The Government gave us back our raffia. We didn't know how to harvest the grass and still get more the next year. We uprooted most of the raffia in the Nou Forest. We were about to run out of it when the intervention started.”



“FARM-Africa is now supporting us to produce large quantities of high quality baskets and mats. If we find the market, we, women of the Nou Forest, are ready to work hard and change the lives of our families.”