

**HEART OF THE MATTER: AGARWOOD USE AND TRADE  
AND CITES IMPLEMENTATION FOR *AQUILARIA MALACCENSIS***

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Credit TRP Vietnam, 1996

**Forester in Vietnam experimenting with agarwood formation in *Aquilaria* spp.**

## **HARVEST, TRADE AND CITES IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN KEY AQUILARIA RANGE STATES**

### **BHUTAN**

Both *Aquilaria malaccensis* and *A. khasiana* are native to Bhutan (Kanjilal and Das, 1940, cited in Gupta, 1999; Oldfield *et al.*, 1998). Research conducted on the agarwood trade in neighbouring India indicates that Bhutanese agarwood is considered to be of high quality. One agarwood dealer based in Dubai, interviewed in Mumbai (India) considered that, of all range States for *A. malaccensis*, Bhutan was the source of the best-quality agarwood. However, supplies are restricted owing to the strict control over forest access and harvest and a ban on exports since 1991. Indian traders believe that there are vast tracts of highly guarded natural forests containing *A. malaccensis* under the control of the Bhutanese Royal family.

Chamling (1996) notes that although agarwood is still found in Bhutan's forests it is considerably less abundant than it once was owing to illegal harvest. CITES annual report data show Bhutan as the export destination for small amounts of agarwood during 1995, 1996 and 1997. Commercial production is no longer reported to occur in Bhutan (Chamling, 1996; Heuveling van Beek and Phillips, 1999).

Trial plantations established in Panbang and Samdrup Jongkha in the 1980s have been successful in terms of growth but not in terms of agarwood production (Chamling, 1996).

Bhutan is not a Party to CITES.