International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Minutes of the 3rd Expert Workshop on the Isle of Vilm

Implementation of the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

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Minutes

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International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

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4.1. Workshop Agenda

4.2. List of participants

4.3. Presentations (CD)

Abbreviations used:

ABS Access and Benefit Sharing

BMZ Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)

DG ISSC-MAP Decision Group

DJL Danna Leaman

FSC Forest Stewardship Council

ITC International Trade Centre

PIC Prior Informed Consent

XB Ximena Buitron

1. Introduction/Background

An estimated 50,000 to 70,000 plant species are used in traditional and modern medicine systems throughout the world. While some medicinal and aromatic plant (MAP) species, in particular those with high volumes in demand from national and international markets, are currently sourced from cultivation, the majority of MAP species used in medicine is still – and will be over the long term – provided by collection from the wild.
A considerable portion of the world's MAP species and populations are threatened due to over-harvesting and habitat loss. Approaches to wild MAP collection that balance the needs of local, regional and international markets with the need for conservation and sustainable use are urgently needed.

Industry, governments, organic certifiers, resource managers and collectors are concerned about declining MAP populations and supplies, and are asking for a means to assess whether wild collection is sustainable. Consumers also want evidence that products are produced sustainably and ethically.

To meet this need, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the IUCN Medicinal Plant Specialist Group, WWF Germany and TRAFFIC, developed the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) in a joint initiative, started in 2004. The initial core group has expanded to include industry and certification expertise and expand regional expertise.
Version 1.0 of the Standard was launched in February 2007 and is now available for application to MAP collection operations.

The ISSC-MAP has now entered its initial implementation phase, with several implementation projects already planned and a series of next steps identified to support the Standard's use and further evolution. This period will be used to develop guidance, case studies, and models for good collection practice. This experience will also be used to refine the Standard.

The present document summarises the results of the workshop.

2. Overview

2.1. Objectives of the workshop

The main objectives of the 3rd expert workshop on the implementation of the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection (ISSC-MAP) were to:

- Get a clear understanding of the status of the ISSC-MAP project and the individual implementation projects
- Get a clear understanding of the aims for the starting initial implementation phase
- Create a network/discussion forum for the next years
- Get to know each other, and a good idea of who is doing what
- Exchange experiences and expectations
- Establish the basis for continuous mutual support
- Develop a common vision

2.2. Participants in the workshop

The participants in the 3rd expert workshop were members of the ISSC-MAP Decision Group, ISSC-MAP Secretariat and representatives from the upcoming ISSC-MAP implementation projects.

(List of participants, see Annex 2)

2.3. Expectations of participants

The following expectations concerning the workshop were expressed at the beginning of the meeting:

- Exchange experiences from different backgrounds and countries
- Clarify what implementation projects expect/need from the ISSC-MAP Decision Group and Secretariat
- Clarify open questions regarding implementation of ISSC-MAP in different contexts, especially adaptation to local conditions

3. Results

3.1. Presentations

After a brief introduction to the status of the ISSC-MAP project and its implementation (*Britta Pätzold, WWF and TRAFFIC*) all ISSC-MAP implementation projects were presented. These were:

1. Implementation of the ISSC-MAP Standard in Uttarakhand, India (*Giridhar Kinhal, FRLHT / Samir Sinha, TRAFFIC India*)
2. International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) - Piloting in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Nepal (*Indu Bikal Sapkota, WWF Nepal*)
3. Sustainable Use of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants in Cambodia (*Thomas Osborn, TRAFFIC Vietnam*)
4. Implementation of the ISSC-MAP Standard in Brazil – (*Ximena Buitron, IUCN Sur Ecuador*)
5. Harvest of *Pelargonium sidoides* in Lesotho and South Africa (*David Newton, TRAFFIC South Africa*)
6. Wild Collection of Herbal Raw Materials: from a Manufacturer´s Point of View, ISSC-MAP implementation in Ukraine (*Marco Willius, Martin Bauer GmbH & Co KG Germany*)
7. Bearberry and Liquorice wild collection - First assessments of ISSC-MAP applicability (*J. Brinckmann, Traditional Medicinals Inc. USA*)
8. ECBP- The Europe Union China Biodiversity Project (*Xueyan Liu, TRAFFIC China*)

Presentations included:

- a brief description of the local situation
- description of the target groups
- local, regional and national partner organisations
- expected benefits of ISSC-MAP implementation
- potential problems and critical points

(*Presentation see Annex 3, CD*)

3.2. Discussion

Critical points and questions from the presentations were discussed with a focus on the upcoming implementation of ISSC-MAP in a variety of ecological and socio-economic circumstances.

The participants identified a number of main issues to be addressed:

A) Target species selection for ISSC-MAP implementation

This was seen as a critical point for ISSC-MAP applicability in the implementation projects, especially as - within the BMZ funded projects (‘Saving Plants that Save Lives and Livelihoods’) - the short project period of 18-20 months is a limiting factor.

As the ecological aspects of a selected species have a strong influence on ISSC-MAP implementation in the single projects and can even be a no-go criterion, the selection shall be done carefully.
In the discussion it was pointed out that, from the market side, species selection has already been done. Now the sustainability of the species commercially used has to be tested.

Relevant points to be considered/requiring further discussion included:

- Need for species selection criteria (for the implementation projects)
- Time factor of species selection process method
- Quality standards required for commercial use
- Prioritization of threatened species?
- "Banned" species as target for ISSC-MAP?

B) Further development of the ISSC-MAP

With the ISSC-MAP now entering the initial implementation phase on the ground, it will be important to find a transparent, careful way to address local circumstances and involve local actors in an adequate way.

Critical points identified included:

- Participation of local/regional actors
- Adaptation versus adoption
- Adaptation to local context (indicator flexibility)

  It was pointed out that the standard consists of principles and criteria. The indicators provide only suggestions to give support for implementation (DJL). The ISSC-MAP Decision Group hopes to get more feedback on local adaptation needs through the upcoming implementation phase. It was stressed that it shall be made clear in the standard itself that the indicators are flexible and can be adapted (XB).
- Target group and stakeholders' involvement
- IPR, ABS as sensitive issues (companies involved?)
- Link to the market

C) Implementation of the ISSC-MAP

Points raised were:

- Harmonization with other relevant sectors and existing schemes (e.g. organic)
- Impact of legal implementation
- Clarification of who is responsible for implementation (e.g. consultant)
- Verification of ISSC-MAP implementation
- Future potential chances in product certification

Several participants pointed out that it is important for successful project implementation to know from the beginning into which direction the ISSC-MAP project is heading and to clearly communicate this to partners. Guidance from the Decision Group is needed in this context.

On the other hand it became clear that, as a first step, a certifiable standard is needed, because only this ensures credibility. The question of how exactly the standard will be implemented could then be decided afterwards. The ISSC-MAP has been designed as a raw material standard and will not be applicable for processing.
In several countries (e.g. India and China), certification is now seen as a possibility to get higher prices and better market access. On the other hand certification systems such as FSC involve high costs. For successful implementation it will be important to show people on the ground the benefits of ISSC-MAP implementation, incentives from the market and the advantage of ISSC-MAP in comparison to other standards.

D) Costs of ISSC-MAP implementation

- Impact of ISSC-MAP implementation on threatened species
- Tracking all cost categories and project budgets is important to get an overview of real costs
- Cost calculation (needed for potential partners, projects, donors. Difficult as some costs will only become evident during the implementation process)

E) Timelines

BMZ project 'Saving Plants that Save Lives and Livelihoods' (11/2007 – 06/2009): As there is no time flexibility from the donor side, wording has to be very careful, as only the initiation of ISSC-MAP implementation can be achieved within the short timeframe.

F) Training requirements for ISSC-MAP implementation

Critical points identified include:

- Information has to be gathered on training needs, trainers and human capacity in the project area and among relevant actors
- Aim: Professionalize wild collection (raise the prestige of wild collection, and provide better income opportunities to make this work more attractive for local people. Several companies already face the problem that collectors are becoming rare).

G) Translation of the standard into local languages as an essential pre-condition for implementation

Critical points identified include:

- Translation (verification of accuracy)
- Colloquial transliteration – (bring ISSC-MAP components into local context)

H) Post project - Outlook

- Long term perspective – How to ensure the long term sustainability of the ISSC-MAP project
- Fate of pilot projects – Secure follow up funding

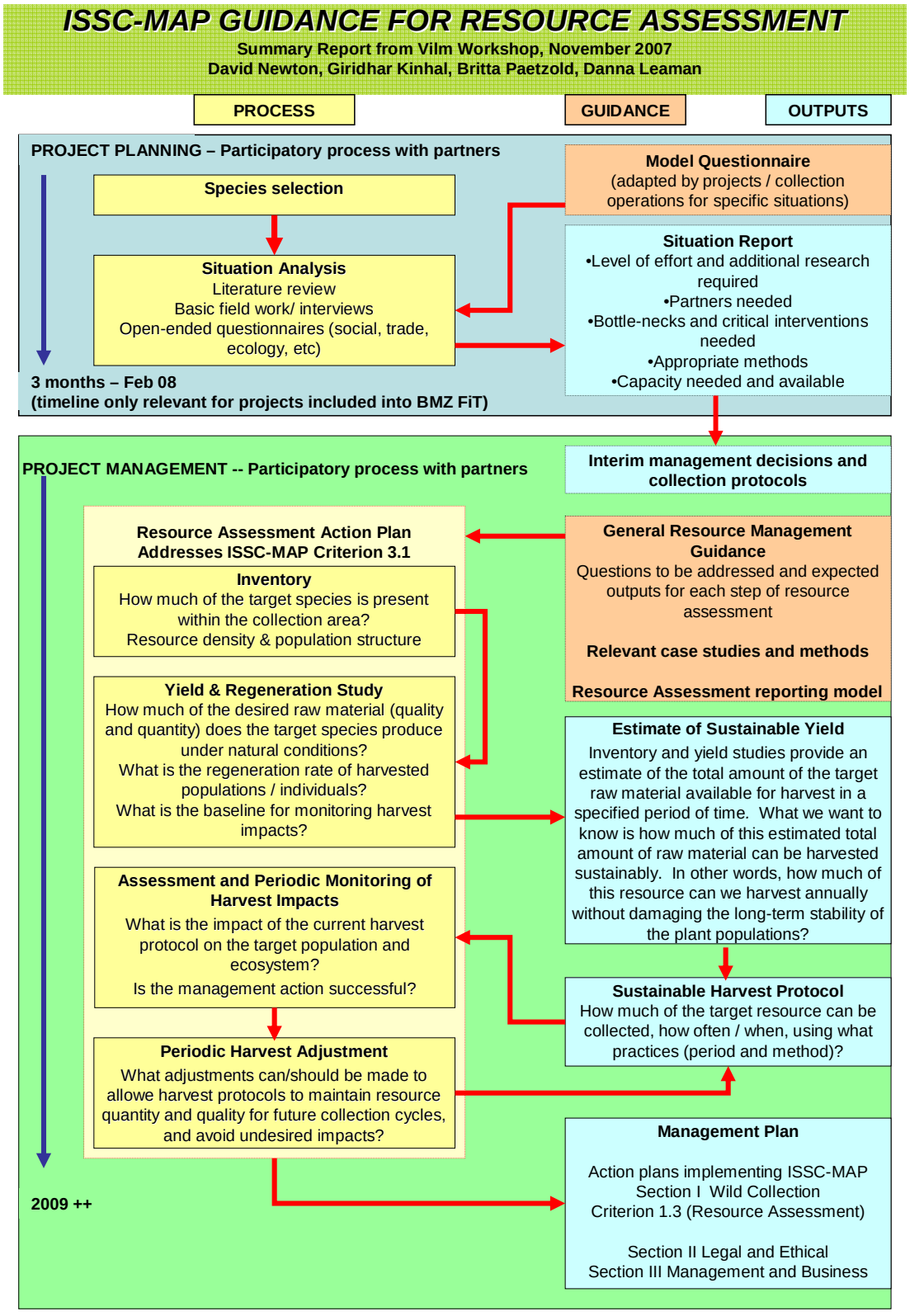
Three working groups were formed addressing selected topics of the discussion:

1) Resource Assessment Guidance Documents (D. Leaman, D. Newton, G. Kinhal, B. Pätzold)

2) Management Plan Guidance Document (T.Osborn, X. Buitron, S.Sinha, I. Bikal Sapkota, W. Kathe)
3) Mixed issues: Species selection criteria, International market links, translation, training (J. Brinckmann, S. Honnef, J. Jabs, R. Bächi, M. Willius, X. Liu)

The results are compiled in the following sections.

3.2.1. Resource Assessment Guidance Documents



The Resource Assessment Guidance Document Group has provided a basic questionnaire to be used for the situation analysis by end of November 2007. Further guidance documents related to the resource assessment will be provided by April 2008.

For project evaluations the situation analysis and interim management solution shall be used.

3.2.2. Management Plan Guidance Document

Basis for this working group was the document '*Developing a management plan for sustainable wild collection of wild plants, Draft 2, 30.09.2007'* provided by Sylvia Winkler

Overall impressions of the draft Management Plan Document:

- Comprehensive
- Inclusive of most relevant details
- Sometimes too detailed
- Occasional negative feeling for reader by frequent negative wording
- Too much emphasis on MUST

Some issues to resolve:

- Target audience for management plan – clarification;
- Harmonization with national/local regulatory framework- How, When ??
- Time for Implementation?
    - When do we begin?
    - When do we finish?
- Clarification of structure of plan:
    - Present management structure, if any
    - Proposed Management
- Choice of words
    - Maximum/Optimum
        - E.g.: establish 'optimum' instead of 'maximum' collection quantities

Suggestions:

- Add a glossary
- Simplify terminology & stricter copy editing (final proof-reading by native speaker)
- Keep document's overall structure as it is at present and revise it later, based on the development of other guidance documents
- Promote awareness of the Standard and guidance amongst relevant partners such as IUCN,WWF, other NGOs etc.
- Revision of the title:
    - Framework for Developing an Adaptive Management Plan for Sustainable Collection of Medicinal Plants
- Table of Contents
    - Move Stakeholders from Sec. 5 to Sec 3.
        - Background
        - Collection Area
        - Stakeholders……
- Replace 'Other management objectives' by 'Management systems', Chapter 5.

- Add Benefit Sharing to Chapter 9
- Change 'Risk assessment' to 'Impact assessment'.
- Simplification of Conservation Status Assessment – Chapter 3.1

Next steps

- Detailed suggestions made by group to be compiled and shared with everybody (by 30th November 2007)
- Send to Decision Group for further action
- Revision and Finalization
- Followed by translation into regional languages, as per need, at the earliest possible.

Final words of wisdom

- Have an implementable plan rather than a perfect plan-

3.2.3. Translation

- The English text of the standard is the original
- The copyright statement in the ISSC-MAP document includes information on obtaining authorization for translation. This is also due for the English version and guidelines.
- Translations shall be made by professional translators and then checked by an ISSC-MAP expert (native speaker or high level language proficiency).
- For official translations (needed e.g. in case of governmental involvement) → responsibility has to be taken by the ISSC-MAP Decision Group
- Only official translations (verified by Decision Group) can use the ISSC-MAP logos, but not the unofficial translations.
- Translations need to reference ISSC-MAP version and date and the persons involved in translations
- Must translations: French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Arabic
- Each project is free to develop its own, target group specific manuals. The ISSC-MAP Secretariat needs copies of all documents or manuals, or at least information of their existence.
- Validation of translation accuracy has to be approved by the local projects
- In several projects a colloquial transliteration together with the stakeholders' participation will be a successful approach

3.2.4. Training

1) A Training task group shall be established
   →To do for the ISSC-MAP Decision Group: Identify members for a training task group, find funds, and describe ToRs

2) Train task group* members within the ISSC-MAP Technical Committee
   ←→ establish monitoring and evaluation system

   *pay special attention to long-term goal:
   - Professional wild collection
   - Good wages, capacity/competence

- Responsibility long term perspective

→ Develop a General tool box I for:
- Local trainers
- Certifiers

→ Develop Specific Tool box II for the local trainers to train:
- Collectors
- Responsible officers of environmental agencies
- Internal control system manager
- Traders

→ Give regularly feedback to Training task group

3.2.5. Species selection for ISSC-MAP implementation projects

Topics to be addressed:

I) Sustainable Use / Conservation issues (as priority selection criteria)
- "banned species" → Decide from case to case whether ISSC-MAP application is possible
- Use IUCN rapid red listing tool (for a general idea about status of species; for support contact D. Leaman)

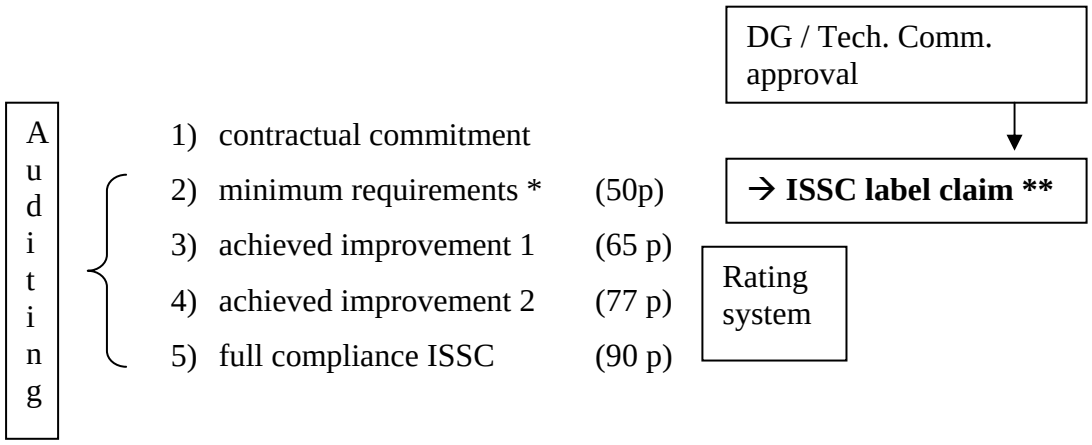
II) Local livelihoods and economic development (as priority selection criteria)

Must criteria:
- not too many species
- not only group I species (i. e. with a focus on sustainable use, or conservation issues)
- mainly easy to implement ISSC-MAP for species selected
- within all projects as a whole we need a variety of plant parts used
- documentation of existing knowledge available
- quantity available (esp. if market link)
- quality
- market demand (local, national)
- marketing intelligence, business concepts
- species need to be selected as soon as possible
- good to monitor, esp. well defined area, distribution-wise, easy identification
- local priority species

Beneficial:
- multiple plant parts used (this was seen critical for the pilot projects)
- species that can be harvested >1x per season
- variety of local value adding capacity
- no trade barriers
- international market links (J. Brinckmann offers to check with ITC databank)
- regulatory status in market (for support contact J. Brinckmann)

3.2.6. Compliance with ISSC-MAP

A suggestion for a Step-wise compliance model was developed



* Minimum requirements: "spontaneous feedback"

- needs to be done on indicator level
- expert group (external) recommendations
  - look at reports 'pre-audits'
  - propose rating and administration system

** at least one harvest period done + control of indicators show trend of regeneration before label claim!

In the further discussion on 3.4., the following suggestions were made:

- Change the terminology, not use "compliance"
- Use "Effort to gain sustainability" as a definition of ISSC-MAP. To really improve sustainability time periods will take several years
- Minimum requirement for any claim of compliance: situation analysis shows likelihood of sustainable harvesting
- Terminology for projects/companies entering the ISSC-MAP implementation process: Example organic: "in conversion".
- There is a need from the market side to communicate efforts and benefits from adhering to ISSC-MAP (incentive), otherwise it will not work successfully. An enforcement system shall be built up, actors fall out if they fail.
- Idea: website showing companies involved in the ISSC-MAP project and their status of compliance.
- Claims of ISSC-MAP compliance have to be limited to a certain time period (validity of certification)
- It has to be clarified if ISSC-MAP is a product or system standard. A product standard can only be given once a project fulfils requirements. System standards focus to management activities.
- Coordination with FairWild Standard needed.