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July 2025

THE FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING

WILD HARVEST IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

FOR THE SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE HARVEST
OF WILD PLANTS AND FUNGI

Funded by the UK Government
through Darwin Initiative.



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TRAFFIC REPORT

ABOUT US

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ON THE COVER

Processing Argan Oil, Morocco

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ABOUT OUR PARTNERS

FAIRWILD FOUNDATION

FairWild is an international organisation working to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of wild plant resources. Through its globally recognised FairWild Standard, they promote best practices in ecological sustainability, social responsibility, and fair trade in wild harvesting. FairWild provides tools for certification, capacity building, and market access, supporting both biodiversity conservation and livelihoods for wild plant collectors. By fostering collaboration across the supply chain—from local communities to global brands—FairWild plays a key role in shaping ethical, traceable, and resilient wild plant value chains.

MBLA

The Moroccan Biodiversity & Livelihoods Association (MBLA) is a national non-profit organisation dedicated to conserving biodiversity while enhancing local livelihoods. Through community-based research, MBLA implements integrated conservation measures and supports traditional cultural practices that protect ecosystems and sustain rural communities. Working in long-term partnership with local communities in the High Atlas, MBLA provides training in sustainable land-use practices and supports the commercialisation of local plants and products to improve incomes and resilience.

GDF

Global Diversity Foundation (GDF) is an international organisation with a holistic approach to sustaining biodiversity, cultural heritage, and local livelihoods. In the High Atlas region of Morocco, GDF supports the socio-economic viability of traditional practices that protect landscapes and ecosystems. Through long-term engagement with rural cooperatives, GDF demonstrates how market-based incentives and integrated landscape management can regenerate habitats while enhancing community well-being. Their work spans the entire value chain—from production and innovation to processing, certification, packaging, and commercialisation—helping local products reach broader markets in ways that support both people and nature.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

FIPs *Fisheries Improvements Projects. A multi-stakeholder effort to address challenges in a fishery. FIPs use the power of the private sector to incentivise improvements in the fishery and seek to make these changes endure through policy change. FIPs always include goals related to environmental sustainability. In recent years, many FIPs have also begun to address other issues, such as human rights, social responsibility and financial sustainability. Source: The Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions*

MSC *Marine Stewardship Council*

UEBT *Union for Ethical Biotrade*

WHIP *Wild Harvest Improvement Projects. A multi-stakeholder initiative designed to support the sustainable production of wild-harvested plant and fungi ingredients within a specific geographic area, using step-wise action plans based on clear commitments to sustainability certification as the end goal*



Argan Fruit



Goats in Argan Tree, Morocco

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Certification of products from wild species can be an important tool for incentivising their conservation and enabling positive social impacts to communities involved in harvest and trade, however producers, particularly small and medium-scale enterprises, can face several barriers when trying to achieve the standards required. In response to these challenges, the fisheries sector developed “Fisheries Improvement Projects” (FIPs), which have become established over the last two decades as tools to address sustainability challenges in fisheries. A FIP is a multi-stakeholder effort¹ which uses the power of the private sector to incentivise improvements in a fishery, and are generally

led by either industry, NGOs, consultants, or governments. Whilst FIPs may work towards certification, certification is not necessarily the end goal in all cases. For a fishery that has no public communication on commitments to sustainability and/or no previous change to practices, a FIP can serve as a starting point for improvement in these spaces. Documented benefits of FIPs include engagement of supply chain stakeholders in fisheries management, leveraging political and regulatory change, enhancing regional/national/international collaboration, and the potential to expand market access to retailers and consumers who seek improvements to sustainability (Crook et al., 2024).

This document presents a draft concept for a similar framework to address sustainability challenges in wild plant and fungi harvesting operations, termed “Wild Harvesting Improvement Projects”(WHIPs). The framework proposed in this document draws upon experiences from FIPs in the fisheries sector, and in particular guidelines by the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions. It has been developed based on a review of experience with FIPs to date as well as research into tools and approaches currently in use in the wild plants and fungi sector, with funding from the UK Government’s

Darwin Initiative. The initial draft was revised based on stakeholder feedback from wide range of experts forming multistakeholder expert group (MEG), including representatives from organisations involved in fisheries management and FIPs, and wild plant and fungi harvesting operations². With support from the project partner organisations, the framework was tested in pilots in Uzbekistan (liquorice root harvesting) and Morocco (argan tree seeds harvesting). The outcomes of the piloting are summarised in a ‘Summary Document’ with proposals for next steps.

THE PROBLEM

People have used and traded wild plants and fungi for millennia. Today, ingredients are traded globally in large and increasing volumes, for food, cosmetics, medicines, and more. Most plant and fungi species in trade (between 60-90%) are wild harvested (Timoshyna et al., 2020). This raises both conservation and social impact concerns.

- Harvesters, collectors and those processing wild plants and fungi are very frequently from marginalised, indigenous and local communities and often experience high levels of poverty (Timoshyna and Drinkwater, 2021). The social risks in wild plant and fungi supply chains are therefore very high.
- Thousands of species are at risk from overharvest and habitat loss, with close to 40% of known plant species -and many described fungi- estimated to be threatened with extinction (Antonelli et al., 2023). Overharvesting can also disrupt sensitive ecosystems and other species. The environmental risk may also be high.

The commercial demand for wild-harvested products can be a positive factor in meeting conservation and development objectives by creating livelihood opportunities for rural

communities harvesting the products, and economic incentives to keep land as natural or semi-natural habitats. When tackling social and environmental sustainability issues associated with the wild harvest of plants and fungi, the aim should therefore be to promote improvements aimed at achieving sustainability, rather than to eliminate the trade.

To date, a combination of approaches has been taken to regulate trade and address supply chain risks. These have included legislative approaches by governments, and voluntary efforts by industry. In terms of the former, trading regional blocs such as the European Union (EU) are increasingly taking legislative approaches to mitigate the risk of products which rely on human and environmental exploitation entering the supply chain. Governments in source countries have also introduced legislation and regulations controlling the harvest and trade. However, in general, regulatory controls on the harvest and trade of wild products remain weak and inconsistently implemented. If poorly designed, regulatory controls can hinder the potential for sustainable use of wild plants and fungi.

Voluntary approaches to improve supply chain sustainability include the development

¹ E.g., involving fisheries experts, government/policy makers, industry, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and fisher communities

² The multistakeholder expert group (MEG) was comprised of representatives from [Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources](#), [Biodiversify the Ethical Trading Initiative](#), [FairWild](#), [Forestry Stewardship Council](#), [Global Diversity Foundation](#), [Marine Stewardship Council](#), [Moroccan Biodiversity & Livelihoods Association](#), [Scientific Certification Systems](#), [Global Services](#), [Sustainable Herbs Initiative](#)

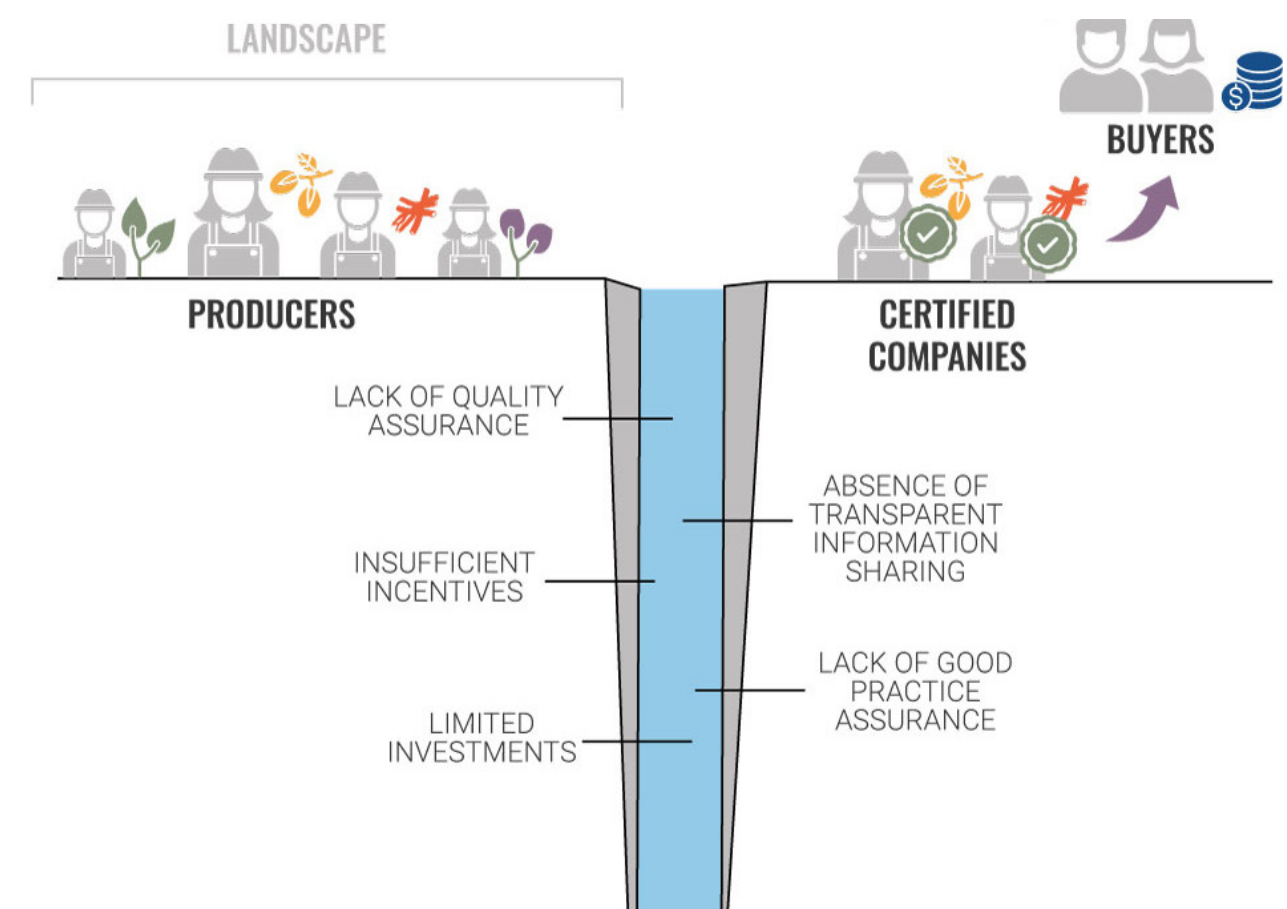


the resource in that landscape, which requires collaboration between multiple stakeholders.

The fisheries sector has faced similar challenges to gaining traction with the uptake of sustainability certification and has developed FIPs in response. This experience has a clear parallel to the situation for wild plants and fungi and hence has been drawn

upon in creating the present conceptual framework for WHIPs. FIPs differ from pre-certification/improver schemes, pathways or tools in that they are not necessarily associated with a specific sustainability standard or certification scheme. They also differ from certification schemes in that improvements are the initial goal, rather than certification.

FIGURE 1
Representation of the Market Gap Between Producers and Certified Companies



of sustainability standards to define good practices and certification frameworks to provide assurances that wild plant and fungi ingredients are sustainably and fairly produced. Certification frameworks such as FairWild and Union for Ethical Biobased Trade (UEBT) have been available for more than 15 years and have gained some traction in the marketplace. However, uptake of certification remains slow due to the challenges of developing a sufficient sustainable supply in a sector where production is dominated by small and medium enterprises with low capacity and tight profit margins (Figure 1). Wild plant and fungi supply chains are also often long, complex and lack transparency, making market access difficult when connecting sustainable producers to buyers.

Other challenges affecting the uptake of sustainability certification for wild plants and fungi include:

- **Supply chain policy and practices of retailers.** Large retailers often have corporate sustainability policies and sourcing guidelines which emphasise fair pricing and adequate working conditions, and many publish reports highlighting their investment in social development programmes. These policies and practices frequently do not cover a sufficient number of supply chain tiers to tackle challenges at a local level. Furthermore, companies are often also buying a wide portfolio of ingredients, with wild plant and fungi ingredients represented in

relatively small volumes. This means that companies tend not to prioritise these ingredients in their efforts to improve environmental and social governance.

- **Linking consumer demand for sustainable products to supply chain investment.** Consumers are increasingly demanding greater transparency and stronger environmental and social credentials in the products they buy, prompting the need for new ways of doing business. However, it can be difficult to turn this general concern into concrete investment in specific supply chains—especially when the brands and retailers that consumers interact with are only buying a small proportion of those raw materials for a small selection of products, which means that the incentives to invest are low.
- **Incentives for producers to invest in certification.** Producers interested in achieving sustainability certification can be discouraged by the lack of short-term return on their investment in improved practices and can lack visibility while working towards this goal. They may require financial support and purchase commitments from buyers to make their investment feasible.
- **Enabling collaboration between harvesting operations.** In complex landscapes where many different harvesters and buyers operate, there may be fundamental issues of resource management to resolve to reach the standards required for certification of





Argan Fruit Harvesting, Morocco

THE WHIP FRAMEWORK

DEFINITION OF A WILD HARVEST IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (WHIP)

For the purposes of this report, a Wild Harvesting Improvement Project (WHIP) is defined as

‘A multi-stakeholder initiative designed to support the sustainable production of wild-harvested plant and fungi ingredients within a specific geographic area, using step-wise action plans based on clear commitments to sustainability certification as the end goal’.

The aim of a WHIP is to use the collective power of those engaged in the wild harvesting area – including the private sector – to incentivise improvement and ensure lasting changes through policy or practice. The WHIP should include targets in environmental and social sustainability³, human rights outcomes and a focus on generating dignified livelihoods and financial sustainability for harvesters and processors.

A summary of a WHIP is provided in Figure 2, which demonstrates participation between producers within a harvesting area and collaborations with other stakeholders to design, implement, and document an improvement plan. A successful WHIP can enable producers to connect with markets with

an interest in sourcing wild plant and fungi ingredients sustainably.

Successful partnership and multi-stakeholder working is essential to creating long lasting changes and improvements for those who harvest and the communities they come from. WHIPS can be initiated by various stakeholders within a landscape who ideally will all be committed to constructive and progressive improvements to environmental and social improvements. Annex 3 outlines a set of principles that can be used as a foundation for collaboration and multi-stakeholder working. All stakeholders can refer back to these to encourage positive collaboration and effective outcomes during development of a WHIP (Annex 3).

³ FIPs initially focused on environmental sustainability but have more recently recognised the importance of social responsibility, economic sustainability and traceability to enable long term improvements to the sustainability of fisheries (see [FIP Guidelines](#) published in 2023).

FIGURE 2
A summary of a Wild Harvest Improvement Plan, demonstrating participation between stakeholders to develop, implement, and demonstrate improvements to achieve sustainability of wild plant and fungi harvesting operations.

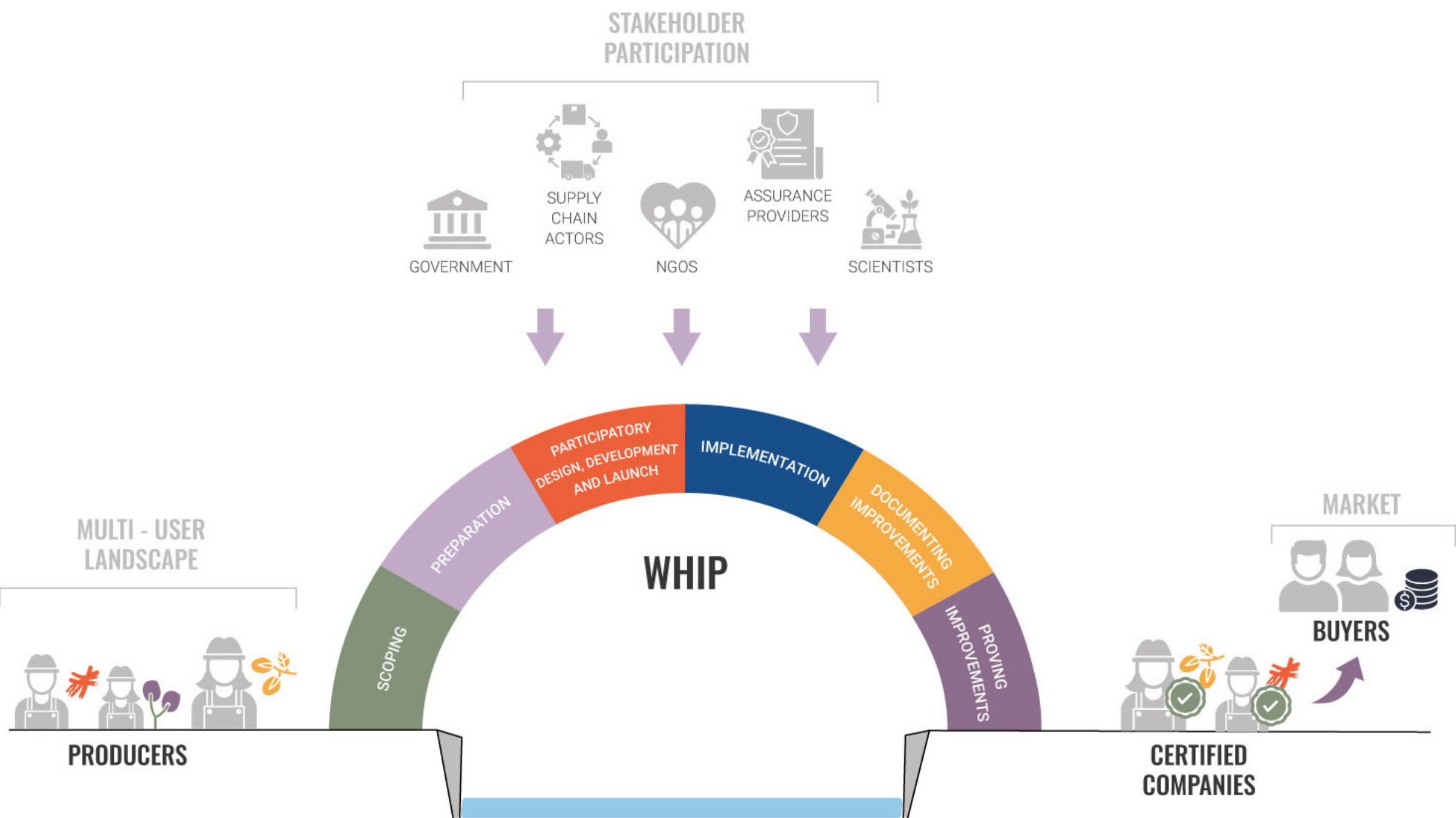


TABLE 1
Differences between a WHIP, pursuing certification, or participating in improvement schemes that some certification schemes offer

	CERTIFICATION SCHEMES (E.G., FAIRWILD, UNION FOR ETHICAL BIOTRADE)	PRE-CERTIFICATION/IMPROVER SCHEMES (E.G., FAIRWILD PATHWAY OPER- ATORS, THE MSC IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM)	WILD HARVESTING IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (WHIPS)
Can lead to improvements in ensuring the sustainability of wild species harvesting operations	✓	✓	✓
Always associated with a specific certifica- tion scheme or standard	✓	✓	
Achieving certification standards is a more immediate goal	✓	✓	
Certification is the ideal end goal, but the process to get there is more flexible and less time-bound, with a more immediate focus on improvements			✓

Key differences between a WHIP, and simply pursuing certification, or participating in improvement schemes that some certification schemes offer, are outlined in Table 1.

In developing the draft WHIPs framework presented in this document, several assumptions were made:

- The multi-stakeholder, participatory approach of FIPs is sufficiently adaptable to fit the context of the wild plant and fungi harvesting sector.
- Voluntary sustainability standards and certification systems can represent best-practice in wild plant and fungi harvesting and will result in benefits to harvesters. In this framework, the FairWild Standard has been used as the benchmark for wild harvest sustainability. The framework can be flexibly adapted to other standards.

- Harvester communities are willing to engage with the WHIPs approach, including any socio-cultural modifications this might entail, e.g., sharing harvesting data potentially with other harvesters.
- Supply chain actors (processors, manufacturers, retailers) are sufficiently committed to sustainability measures to engage with the WHIPs framework and will potentially commit funds and in-kind support to pilots.
- Other practitioners and policy makers are also interested in the WHIP framework and willing to engage in further testing and providing feedback.

These assumptions should be tested through the piloting of the WHIPs framework, with adaptations made as necessary.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF WHIPs

Positive outcomes documented in FIPs, which could be applicable in a WHIP, include:



Stakeholder engagement, a better understanding of others and positive changes in behaviour

The process of creating and implementing a FIP can help all supply chain stakeholders understand the challenges of other actors and become more directly engaged in fishery management. For example, buyers can obtain a greater understanding of issues affecting fisheries, which results in them supporting improvement efforts. FIPs have led to positive changes in the attitudes and behaviours of stakeholders, leading to previous competitors working together due to their shared vision.



Regional, national and international collaboration

FIPs have led to governments and other stakeholders in different countries working together to address mutually important issues. For example, due to the development of FIPs for Mahi Mahi in the eastern Pacific Ocean, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) science staff collaborated with government scientists from several countries to address regional stock issues.



Policy change, political momentum, additional funding resources and improved data collection

FIPs may identify a need for governments to implement changes in policy or regulations. Many FIP participants/stakeholders have

Other examples of positive changes documented in FIPs include:

- Enabling continued market access to buyers who seek sustainably produced products with greater environmental and social benefits
- Including the cost of a FIP in a business to ensure financial support for improvements
- Incorporating mechanisms and tools to increase traceability
- Improving communication with the public

Annex 2 (section 2) provides a more detailed breakdown of the advantages to using a WHIP,

based on the findings from two landscapes that piloted the scoping stages of the WHIP framework. The benefits highlighted during these pilot studies include:

- supporting collaboration between producers operating in a shared landscape,
- promotion of community-led governance and control of sourcing areas, with adequate benefit sharing mechanisms and social safeguarding, and
- that WHIPs can be used as a diagnostic tool to identify areas for improvement



Liquorice plants, Uzbekistan

APPROACHES TO WHIPs

In the fisheries sector, a distinction between a strict and flexible improvement approach, and basic and comprehensive FIPs has been made.

- A **strict approach** covers all aspects of a standard and its criteria, with independent auditors, set timeframes, and a clear **aim of reaching certification**.
- A **flexible approach** focuses on a select number of priorities and improving practices, with the **possibility of certification, but this is not necessarily the end goal**.
- A Basic FIP would be an entry point for fisheries to begin addressing **specific** environmental and social challenges
- A Comprehensive FIP would aim to address **the full range of challenges** so that a fishery can achieve a high level of sustainability, with specific performance levels required with regards to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard – the benchmark used for sustainability in the fisheries sector.

Currently, no such distinction has been made for WHIPs, with the draft framework proposed here designed to enable a ‘comprehensive’ WHIP, which can in turn support the strict approach with certification as an end goal. This will be reviewed at a later stage to see if a model similar to a Basic FIP would be beneficial to support entry in the wild plants and fungi sector.

This framework currently aligns with the **strict approach** outlined above, where certification is the end goal of a WHIP. This will be reviewed based on further piloting of the framework to see a flexible improver approach can be beneficial in the context of wild harvesting operations.

There are also distinctions made between Basic and Comprehensive FIPs.

KEY ELEMENTS OF A WHIP

The following are key elements of a WHIP:

Participation:

A successful WHIP needs to involve a variety of supply chain actors and other stakeholders. Active participation⁴ is essential for producers and other supply chain actors. Groups that are potentially impacted by WHIP activities, but are not active participants, should also be consulted. This can include, but is not limited to:

- **Producers** (harvesters, collection operations) should be involved in developing the WHIP from the beginning. They will be directly involved in implementation.
- **Supply chain actors** (processors, traders, manufacturers, retailers) can support a WHIP through financial or in-kind contributions, political leverage, procurement policies and specific purchasing commitments.
- **Non-governmental organisations** (NGOs) can be involved in WHIPs in a coordination/advisory role, may convene stakeholders, and support the implementation of WHIP activities. They may be able to provide financial and technical resources.
- **Scientific experts** can support research and collect relevant environmental, social and economic data. This may be necessary to support private or government management actions as well as other stakeholders.
- **Industry representatives** may be able to provide insight into companies keen to integrate the purchase of products from WHIPs into their sourcing policies.

⁴ Active participation means contributing financial or in-kind support to the WHIP, working on actions in the work plan, or both.

- **Government** involvement, action and oversight may be necessary when a WHIP requires significant changes in resource management structures and processes. Investments in infrastructure, capacity building and training, etc. may also be possible through government programmes and resources.
- **Assurance providers** (e.g. certification bodies) can provide verification of progress towards a sustainability standard as a result of participation in a WHIP.

Public commitment

Participants need to publicly commit to financially investing in and improving their wild harvest practices. This could be done for example by signing a memorandum of understanding with relevant partners and stakeholders in the landscape, or publishing a participant list via a relevant platform. As is the case with FIPs, participants don't have to publicly disclose their financial contributions but should publicly declare their commitment to the WHIP. Public commitments demonstrate to stakeholders a level of transparency and accountability in moving towards a more sustainable supply chain and alignment with sustainability goals.

Objectives

A WHIP should define the near-term scope of the project with a set of time-bound objectives with clearly assigned responsibilities, and a commitment from participants to achieve a sustainability certification standard. The exact certification standard does not need to be outlined in the early phases of a WHIP, as this is likely to become defined during the WHIP itself.

Workplan

A WHIP should develop and implement a work plan, including an associated budget and deadlines, which is designed to address the deficiencies in the wild harvesting area and social responsibility risks to achieve the project's objectives. The work plan (but not necessarily the budget) should be made publicly available via a relevant platform.

Progress tracking and public reporting

A WHIP should regularly track and report progress, including 1) publicly reporting on actions and their results with supporting documentation every six months, and 2) updating indicator scores and providing supporting evidence for score changes every 12 months⁵. This could be at a collective level with shared reports between operations or individually and collated by the core group coordinating the WHIP.

PATHWAYS AND STRATEGIES FOR WHIPs

Recognising the fact that the context in which such systems operate significantly influences the scale, depth and durability of their impacts, and that this is a vital consideration when designing new strategies, the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance (ISEAL Alliance) and AidEnvironment developed a guide on choosing effective sustainability strategies based on enabling conditions, which is designed to be applicable across a range of sectors. The guide includes a decision-making framework to help select appropriate improvement strategies with a consideration of the global, national and/or local context/s, and outlines two main types of strategies:

1) **Value chain strategies** influence enterprise performance directly via standards and market incentives (such as price premiums and fair-trading practices), and include their respective support mechanisms (such as capacity building, tools, technology and finance)

2) **Systemic strategies** seek to influence the enabling environment to strengthen the potential effectiveness of value chain strategies, and can include awareness raising, knowledge development, stakeholder dialogue and coordination, and service, private and/or public sector development/engagement.

A WHIP may focus on either of these, or a combination of both.

⁵ The regulatory of reporting requirements may be adjusted based on further piloting of the WHIP framework

View from the top of Kungurbuka Mountain, Uzbekistan

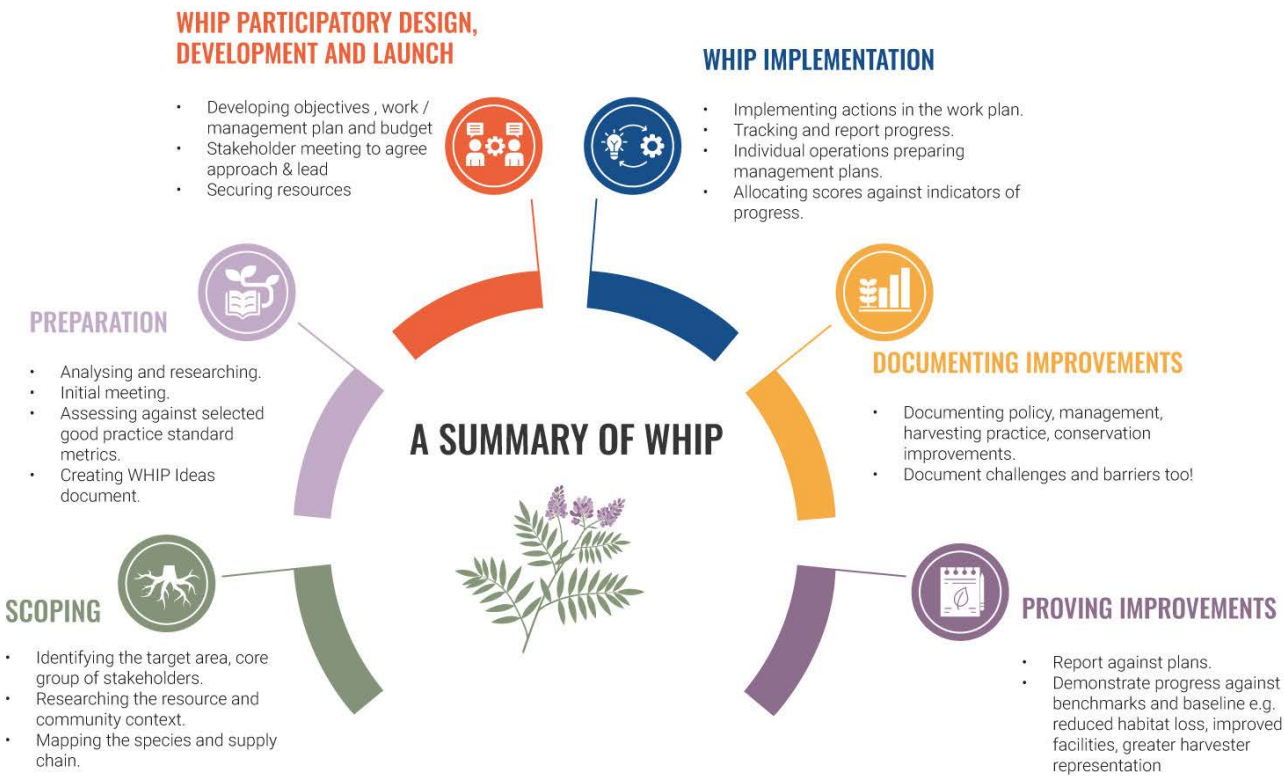


PROCESS FOR CREATING WHIPs

The following framework is a simple “skeleton” draft, covering the different stages in developing a WHIP. In reality, the process is not linear, and the steps below may not be followed in strict sequence. Figure 3 provides

a summary of the WHIP framework, with each step outlined in more detail below. Additionally, Annex 1 provides a short visual guide to each stage and some suggested tools which could adapt for use in developing a WHIP.

FIGURE 3
A summary of a WHIP



STAGE 1: WHIP SCOPING

The WHIP process starts by **identifying the focal resource⁶, target area and a core group of interested stakeholders to initiate the process**. To identify the focal resource various criteria can be considered, including environmental and sustainability concerns for that resource, market relevance and demand, local community dependence and socioeconomic value, supply chain leverage and feasibility within the landscape for that resource. This is followed by researching the resource and community context, as well as analysing the supply chain to understand sourcing of ingredients from the area and

what market leverage exists. Tools such as stakeholder mapping, socioeconomic assessments and supply chain analyses are used. This information is then used to decide on a suitable WHIPs pathway (value chain, systemic or a combination of these), using a decision tree/guidance for choosing appropriate strategies, such as that developed by ISEAL.

Suggested tools: Stakeholder mapping, socio-economic assessment, supply chain analysis, ISEAL and AidEnvironment guidance on choosing effective sustainability strategies based on enabling conditions

⁶ A focal resource is a wild-harvested biological material that is collected for commercial, subsistence or cultural use and is generally identified to species or genus level.

STAGE 2: WHIP PREPARATION

The second stage involves further **analysis and research** into the situation, to **gather sufficient background information** for Stage 3. The research focus and tools to be used will depend on the WHIP pathway identified in Stage 1, and the types of approaches being considered. For example, for a value chain strategy, a relevant pre-assessment or audit may be carried out, using the FairWild Standard and checklist as the sustainability benchmark⁷. The full range of stakeholders

who will be impacted by the project or have a role in addressing the priority challenges identified, will also be analysed. Stage 1 and 2 results are then summarised in a WHIP “summary” document, which should also include recommendations for strategies and activities to be discussed and agreed upon during Stage 3.

Suggested tools: Baseline assessment, FairWild Standard checklist

STAGE 3: WHIP PARTICIPATORY DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND LAUNCH

This stage involves bringing together all relevant stakeholders, discussing the information collected and prepared in Stages 1 and 2, and developing objectives, a work/management plan and a budget. Financial resources for implementation should also be secured. This process may require several stakeholder meetings; time taken to properly plan, adapt and build relationships at this stage is likely to result in more success in the

long-term. The core group identified in Stage 1 would take the lead during this stage, however they may not ultimately lead implementation of the WHIP. Once Stage 3 outputs have been finalised, and roles/partnerships formalised through Memoranda of Understanding or other means, the WHIP can officially be launched.

Suggested tools: Stakeholder engagement tool, action plan / workplan.

STAGE 4: WHIP IMPLEMENTATION

The WHIP begins implementing actions in the work plan, tracking and reporting progress, and course correcting/updating the work plan if needed. Individual wild harvest operations participating in the WHIP will prepare and implement their own management plans, if not already available. Stages 4, 5 and 6

can run simultaneously, as Stages 5 and 6 involve evaluating WHIP progress, both whilst the project is being implemented and on completion.

Suggested tools: Action plan/workplan, FairWild annotated management plan

STAGE 5: DOCUMENTING IMPROVEMENTS IN WILD HARVESTING PRACTICES OR MANAGEMENT

Any demonstrated improvements based on implementation of the work plan are recorded, such as improvements in policy, management or harvesting practices, improved data collection and/or changes in benchmarking

scores for associated indicators. Regular reporting of progress is made.

Suggested tools: FairWild Standard checklist, Case study collection template, WHIPs progress report.

STAGE 6: PROVING ACTUAL IMPROVEMENTS TO CORE WILD HARVESTING PRINCIPLES

A benchmarking/monitoring system should be developed for the WHIP. The design and metrics used will be dependent on the strategy type. However, it should use information from the baseline assessment, initial scoping and other design documents. This last stage focuses on providing evidence for actual improvements on the ground,

such as a decrease in habitat loss, ensuring harvest levels remain within limits that allow populations to recover at an equal or higher rate, and improved worker and customary rights.

Suggested tools: FairWild Standard checklist, workplan, progress reports, baseline assessment.

⁷FairWild has been used for this project/pilot but others could be added & trialled in future

STATUS OF WHIPs

The following status definitions have been developed to aid the public listing of WHIPs, in the event of a platform being developed for this purpose. Public listing is a useful approach to increase transparency, to help businesses to identify WHIPs to participate in, and to prevent the development of multiple WHIPs covering the same species/geographic region.

Prospective. WHIPs are considered prospective when they're in Stage 1, 2 or 3.

Active. WHIPs are considered active when they have completed Stage 3, i.e. they have been publicly launched.

Completed. WHIPs are considered completed when all producers participating in them have reached certification standard.

Inactive. A definition of inactive will be made once reporting requirements and progress measures have been clarified.

SUPPORTING WHIPs

Completing a WHIP can take significant time and resources. Considering the financial dimension of wild harvest improvement work from the outset can reduce the risks associated with WHIPs and ensure lasting improvements.

It's especially important to make sure that the burden and costs of improvement don't fall disproportionately on producers. Uneven distribution of the costs of improvement can exacerbate inequalities. These inequities are likely to jeopardise the success of a WHIP by forcing a reduction in scope, longer implementation timeframes, or both.

Funding for a WHIP may come from different sources, including Government Aid Agencies for sector improvement plans, and from the private sector, including investments made by manufacturers and retailers sourcing ingredients from the prospective WHIP. Buyers and brands should ensure that they support WHIPs so they may undertake the assessments and improvements defined

by these guidelines. This support includes ensuring WHIPs are well-resourced and supported financially.

WHIP participants should create a budget detailing the costs of both environmental and social improvements, after undertaking a baseline assessment of performance. A budget for investments needed at the collective level (resource management improvements, infrastructure, training) should also be developed. A budget detailing the costs and revenue sources demonstrates the business case for starting a WHIP.

After reviewing publicly available information and/or consulting with NGO partners and other stakeholders, businesses can engage in improvement projects in several ways, including contributing financially / in-kind, getting involved in the project activities, sending a letter of support, and asking supply chain actors to participate in the project or source from producers involved in a WHIP.



Sortin Argan Seeds, Morocco

PILOTING OF THE WHIP FRAMEWORK

TABLE 2
Scoping phase of the WHIPs framework in Morocco and Uzbekistan

	MOROCCO	UZBEKISTAN
Piloted by	Moroccan Biodiversity & Livelihoods Association (MBLA)	FairWild Foundation
Species	Argan tree <i>Argania spinosa</i>	Liquorice <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>
Commodity	Seeds	Roots

The scoping phase of the WHIPs framework was piloted in landscapes in two countries as indicated in table 2

The scoping pilots successfully identified core stakeholders and mapped current supply chains to identify barriers and opportunities for sustainable harvest and trade of the species in the target areas. In both cases, recommendations emerging from the pilot studies for next steps aligned with a combination pathway for a WHIP (e.g., encompassing both value chain and systemic approaches).

FairWild and MBLA also provided feedback on pros and limitations of using a WHIP in their landscapes, with a summary provided below

**PROS:**

- Can support collaboration between producers operating in a shared landscape
- Can enable of community-led governance and control of sourcing areas, with adequate benefit sharing mechanisms and social safeguarding
- Can be used as a diagnostic tool to identify areas for improvement

**LIMITATIONS:**

- Producers may not be willing to collaborate or share information needed for a WHIP⁸
- The cost of a WHIP could instead be used to initially pursue certification through pre-existing schemes
- It is not yet clear if WHIP approved products would appeal to importers

MBLA also noted that in their context, a flexible improver approach is more appropriate in the short term, with certification the long-term aspiration, but not a precondition for WHIP engagement. This feedback could be integrated into the next iteration of the WHIPs framework.

A summary document, with outcomes of the piloting of the scoping stage of the WHIPs framework is available in Annex 2. Further feedback on the WHIPs framework is welcome and can be directed to TRAFFIC.

⁸This challenges one of the assumptions outlined earlier in this report, that challenged the assumption made that 'Harvester communities will be willing to engage with the WHIPs approach, including any socio-cultural modifications this might entail, e.g., sharing harvesting data, potentially with other harvesters'



Planning Liquorice Harvesting Management, Uzbekistan

NEXT STEPS FOR WHIPs

Key achievements in this project include:

- Establishment of a multi-stakeholder expert group with representatives from organisations involved in fisheries management and FIPs, wild plant and fungi harvesting operations, and other experts in supply chain sustainability.
- Development of a WHIPs framework based on a comprehensive review of experience with FIPs and research into tools and approaches currently in use in the wild plants and fungi sector
- Piloting of the first stage of this framework (e.g., the scoping phase) in Uzbekistan (liquorice root) and Morocco (argan tree seeds) with feedback on the applicability of a WHIP in the two landscapes
- Assessment of interest in WHIP-approved products by importing companies during piloting of WHIP implementation/trialing of products in company supply chains
- Piloting of the framework in other landscapes to get feedback on a wider range of contexts
- Further engagement with industry representatives, including workshops with key importing companies for products from wild plant and fungi, to introduce the concept of a WHIP
- Integration of feedback from current, and further, piloting into improved iterations of the WHIPs framework
- Trialling of other certification standards within the WHIPs framework (e.g., FairWild has been used as a benchmark in this project, but others could be utilised in future pilots)

Recommendations for use of future funding:

- Continuation of piloting in one or both landscapes to test the other five elements of the WHIP framework

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IMAGE CREDITS

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34	FairWild



Argan Oil Processing

ANNEX 1. TABLE OF DEFINITIONS AND RESOURCES

This table is a short visual guide to each stage and some suggested tools which this work could adapt for use in developing a WHIP.

TERM	DESCRIPTION	QUESTIONS TO ASK	RESOURCES
<u>1.Scoping Stage</u>	This can be viewed as a ‘go’ or ‘no go’ information gathering stage. This stage involves identifying a core group of stakeholders who have an interest in the development of a WHIP. It also involves identifying resources available for a WHIP and undertaking an analysis of the context. Who might be involved? What resources are available to support? What is the context for development of a WHIP? A SWOT analysis tool may be useful at this stage e.g what key plant and fungi species, for what use? What economic return? What strengths, barriers, weaknesses and opportunities?	Key questions: Who are the key stakeholders? - Have they been mapped according to interest in multi-stakeholder collaboration? - Have they been engaged already in supply chain improvement initiatives? - Do they have motivation and incentives to engage in improvements? Has a supply chain mapping been completed? Has a WHIPs project area been defined? E.g geographical scope, stakeholder scope Has a socio-economic assessment of supply chain actors been completed? Has a species risk classification been identified?	Get Started FISHE (edf.org) An example of a FIPs scoping document can be found here: FIP Scoping Document Template.docx (live.com) The FairWild management plan: FairWild-ManagementPlanTemplate-Jan2024_annotated.docx might be a useful initial document to use in a simplified format and/or with additional questions on certification pathway approaches. The ISEAL and AidEnvironment guidance on Choosing effective sustainability strategies based on enabling conditions provides tools that can help to determine the improvement approach (e.g., value chain, systemic, or a combination) most suitable for the WHIP
<u>2. Preparation</u>	This stage might involve a pre-assessment audit, value chain analysis or decision tree. This will refine the focus for the WHIP and provide baseline information that can be used for later monitoring.	Has a SWOT analysis been undertaken identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to improvement? Has the SWOT been used to identify key areas for improvement? Have ideas for improvements been documented? Do stakeholders have capacity to engage in project? What is required for this to happen?	FairWild Audit Checklist could be used to assess key areas where a WHIP could help to improve practice: FairWild_3.0_Checklist_13Jan2024.xlsx Knowledge hub - tools – FairWild Foundation Diagnostic Scorecard - Tool_05162018_0.xlsx (sharepoint.com)

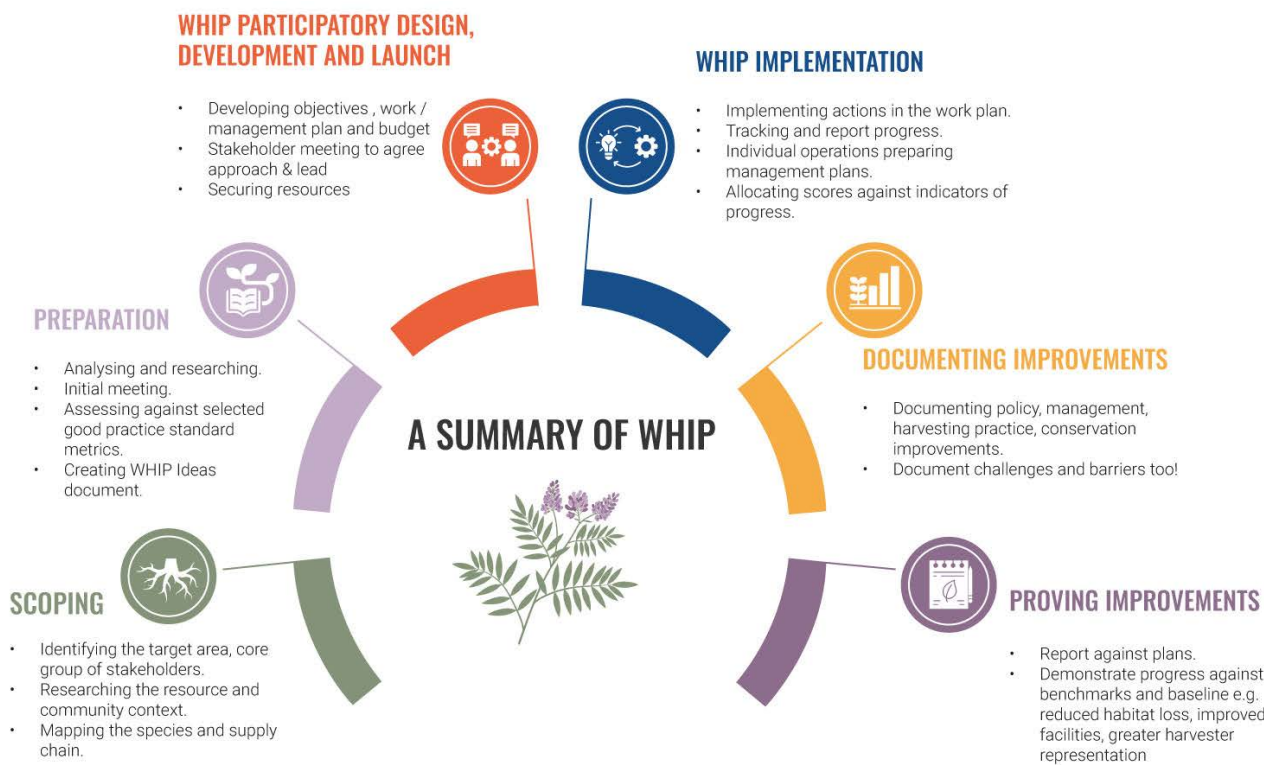
<u>3.Participatory design and development</u>	Stakeholders convene to reflect on scoping and preparation data. Refine barrier/s to be addressed. Determine objectives of WHIP and timeline. Create a workplan for the implementation of a WHIP. Core group lead this process. A memorandum of understanding formalises this process. The WHIP is publicly launched.	Are stakeholders willing to meet? Do stakeholders agree on areas for improvement? What are the key areas of divergence in approach or goals? Who is leading the WHIPs process? What approach is being considered? What is the agreed area of focus for the WHIP? What is the baseline against which improvement will be measured? Have specific, measurable, achievable and timebound targets and a goal been set? What feedback has been provided on ideas and approaches? Have any resources been secured? Has the SWOT been revised according to latest information? How will the WHIP ensure participation in the design and implementation?	Some tools to use in a participatory workshop to assist with this process include: Problem Tree Template Miro and Root Cause Analysis - Tracing a Problem to Its Origins (mindtools.com) A workplan template could be developed to sit alongside the scoping document and indicators. The page 5 action plan may be suitable msc-improvement-action-plan-reporting-template-v2.2-2021.docx
<u>4. Implementation</u>	Implementation against the workplan. Monitoring and course correction.	Are plans running to time? Are improvements on track? What kind of feedback is being received from participants? What changes can be made to improve implementation? What lessons are being learnt?	Reporting against actions/goals in the plan. This could involve elements of the audit checklist but broken down into the smaller component steps to achieve them.
<u>5. Documenting improvements/lessons learnt</u>	Documenting progress against objectives and goals.	Has the WHIP delivered? What evidence is there for improvement? Are there any negative impacts observed? What is the wider impact on the area? Who has been engaged? Are there any changes observed anecdotally? What would the WHIPs project team change about the project if implementing again? What would they keep the same?	Documenting progress and activity will be important so regular updates will need to be provided from partners.
<u>6. Proving improvements</u>	Demonstrating changes against baseline. What proof do we have that the desired progress has been achieved? Report current situation in relation to baseline e.g. sustainable harvest figure, lack of appropriate sanitation for workers, etc.	Have all targets and goals in the WHIP been achieved? If so, what factors ensured this happened? If not, were there factors within control of the project? Are there key elements that require change in future? Is there evidence of wider impacts of the WHIP on the harvesting landscape outside the WHIP area? Have there been any significant impacts on the policy environment for wild harvesting?	Using a traffic light system to verify progress could help to assess against baseline in action plan.

ANNEX 2. SUMMARY DOCUMENT ON THE PILOTING OF THE WHIP CONCEPT IN MOROCCO AND UZBEKISTAN

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Two partner organisations, the FairWild Foundation and the Moroccan Biodiversity & Livelihoods Association, piloted the scoping stages of the WHIP framework (Figure 4). During this scoping stage, the partners used the FairWild Standard to create a baseline assessment in the target landscapes and to identify potential pathway approaches (e.g., value chain or systemic) for a WHIP. These baseline assessments focused on an analysis of gaps between current social and environmental practices and the requirements set out in the FairWild Standard, and identification of actions to close the gaps. As part of this process, consultations and engagement with the Multi-Expert Group (relevant experts on wild harvesting, sustainability standards, and landscape management from CSOs, local governments, and the private sector) were regularly conducted to ensure insights from relevant experts and communities were integrated into the process, and they also provided a thorough review of the findings from the baseline assessments. Alongside the baseline assessments, the partners also provided feedback on potential benefits and drawbacks of a WHIP in the context of each pilot area. A brief synopsis of the information gathered during the scoping phase in each pilot area is provided below, with feedback used to consolidate some pros and limitations of WHIPs based on this initial piloting.

FIGURE 4
A summary of a WHIP



1.1 PILOT AREA ONE

**Country:** Uzbekistan

**Area:** Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic in northwest Uzbekistan

- Key characteristics of the geographic area:
- Sparsely populated, averaging 82 inhabitants per km²
 - The unemployment rate for women is more than double the rate for men
 - Water is scarcer in Karakalpakstan than in the rest of Uzbekistan, making liquorice – a drought-resistant crop- the region's main export, rather than cotton and wheat which are prominent exports from other areas

Species/part: Roots from Liquorice *Glycyrrhiza glabra*

Use: Liquorice has a long history of traditional medicinal use across its range. It is used in the modern era in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and commercially as a flavouring agent.

- Market and supply chains:**
- Approximately 90% of liquorice processors in Uzbekistan supply the Chinese market
 - The export of secondary products is much more lucrative than the sale of primary products, yet Uzbekistan currently mostly exports minimally processed liquorice (e.g., cut and dried roots)
 - Most of the secondary processors in the country (90%) are Chinese owned, but there has been growth in recent years of Uzbekistan-based secondary processors, with 12 based in Karakalpakstan
 - With a legally mandated four-year maturation period for crops, and each farmer only cultivating a small number of liquorice plots, processors are only financially viable if they source from well over a hundred suppliers
 - Contracts between suppliers and processors are required by law for the transport of the roots. Maintaining all of these bilateral contracts is time-consuming and complex, so processors usually buy from intermediaries who specialise in managing supplier relationships

- Current sustainability risks:**
- Ecological:
- As a root crop, harvesting is destructive and requires careful management of wild populations to avoid stock depletion
 - Commercial production of liquorice is incompatible with fully wild populations, but monoculture liquorice farming leads to soil erosion
- Social and economic:
- Nearly all rural land in Uzbekistan is owned by the state and leased out to cultivators. This makes liquorice an economically challenging crop, as its long maturation time of four years means that an annual income is impossible without leasing at least four fields
 - Low prices in the Chinese market and systemically long waits for payment when supplying China, have encouraged the Uzbekistani liquorice sector to seek out new markets, but according to the Liquorice Association, most companies find the more stringent requirements of the European market, such as for certifications and for contamination-free products, to be too difficult to manage
 - Workers are paid by weight and not by hours worked, which means that nominally voluntary overtime is not always paid extra.

- Wages are no higher for liquorice harvesting and processing than they are for any other seasonal work in Karakalpakstan, meaning that labour shortfalls during harvesting season are commonplace
- Harvesters are overwhelmingly men, with women and children being excluded because the process is very physically demanding. Women instead dominate post-harvest processing
- Despite the low rate of pay, liquorice still represents a vital additional source of income to rural people, especially to women who are often excluded from the labour market

Regulatory

- The state requires that all plots are inspected by the Academy of Sciences and Department of Ecology prior to harvesting, after which a harvesting license is given, and a maximum harvest amount is specified.
- All exports require an export license. This must be obtained from the authorities and costs USD 250. The processing time is 15 days. Exporters find the procedures too bureaucratic and time-consuming.
- This complex system of state interference in the sector encourages widespread non-compliance with documentation requirements. This is possible because of the small number of officials employed to monitor enforcement, and it causes poor product traceability.
- In remote plots, theft is commonplace, though companies are increasingly successful in tackling this issue with private guards.
- Increased demand and unregulated harvesting pose risks to biodiversity and long-term livelihoods.

Identification of potential pathway approaches to be used in a WHIP

Systemic approaches

- Advocating for the simplification of regulatory processes and reduced export taxes on sustainable wild-collected products
- Supporting the Liquorice Association as a Business Support Organization to achieve the main targets of WHIPs, as this organization can provide a bridge between companies and government.

Value chain approaches

- Use of science-based quotas and rotational harvesting to ensure long-term sustainability
- Strengthening buyer engagement by fostering relationships with international buyers to sustain demand for certified products (e.g., with the aim of accessing new markets in Europe and North America)
- Create opportunities for effective exchange on matters of sustainability of liquorice supply chains with TCM sector in China, for example through the sectoral association.



Country: Morocco
Area: Primarily Souss-Massa and parts of Marrakech-Safi

Key characteristics of the geographic area:

- Semi-arid climate
- High poverty rates

Species/part: Oil from the seed of the Argan tree *Argania spinosa*

Use: Food, cosmetics, and medicinal. Amlou, a spread made from toasted argan oil, chopped kernels and honey, is often served with bread to welcome guests and is a symbol of Moroccan hospitality.

Markets and supply chain characteristics

- For many people living in the argan forest region, the argan oil sector is an important source of income.
- Argan oil is mainly produced by women, and women-led cooperatives are central actors in the argan value chain. Many women got their first job and their first salary through a cooperative and now have a (mostly) regular income.
- The traditional argan oil sector has been heavily commercialised in recent years, with the control of the trade in argan fruit having largely passed to middlemen who supply the larger companies. The market is now mostly controlled by multinationals- according to one report, the French company Olvea has the largest share at 70%.
- While cooperatives were initially designed to benefit local women and the community, some are now dominated by elites or intermediaries that divert profits from communities
- Whilst 80 % of argan oil was produced by traditional cooperatives in 2008, this figure had fallen to just 18 % by 2018.

Sustainability risks:

Ecological:

- Despite Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status, wild argan resources face degradation due to overharvesting, climate change, and goat browsing.
- The falling water table is caused not only by persistent drought as a result of climate change, but also by increased water consumption as agricultural land expands.
- Threats to the argan forests, particularly from climate change, illegal collection, illegal logging and land use change for settlements and agriculture, threaten the livelihoods of many people and the continued existence of the cooperatives in the argan forest region.
- As a result of persistent overgrazing and drought, the argan forest has hardly rejuvenated in recent years.

Social and economic:

- There is a growing number of cooperatives that no longer have the financial resources to do their own fruit purchasing and processing. Instead, they work as subcontractors in multinational commercial supply chains. They are only responsible for opening the nuts and have had to (involuntarily) give up oil production
- Reductions in oil available for ecological reasons has increased competition for the argan fruit. Due to the high demand for the fruit, the purchase price has multiplied. In interviews, the cooperatives spoke of an increase from 2-5 Moroccan dirhams (MAD) to 8-10 MAD per kilogram when the fruit can be bought directly from the collector. If the fruit is sold through an intermediary, which is usually the case, the price is 15 MAD per kilogram
- Despite rising costs to purchase argan fruit, the women in many of the cooperatives are not benefiting from the higher world prices for argan oil. Women in cooperatives often face long working hours with low remuneration and there are few structures that offer social protection or career advancement.



Argan Fruit



Liquorice Plant Flowers

- Some cooperatives have diversified (e.g., providing guided tours for tourists, and direct marketing in their own shops and restaurants). However, there were also reports of cooperatives that have abandoned argan processing due to the higher purchase prices and are now only a paper existence.
- Some cooperatives are moving away from the argan sector and trying to establish themselves in other sectors, such as carpet weaving

Regulatory

- Unclear land tenure systems in this region lead to disputes and marginalization of smallholders, especially women

Identification of potential pathway approaches to be used in a WHIP

Systemic

- Mapping of argan cooperative ecosystems (both active and dormant)
- Hold multi-day community workshops co-facilitated by trusted local NGOs, focusing on governance, land tenure, benefit sharing, and market access to co-create the WHIP workplan.
- Prioritize infrastructure investments and ensure quarterly reflection meetings with community representatives to adapt plans in real time
- Investment in women's leadership and inter-cooperative federations

Value chain

- Conduct a comprehensive SWOT analysis with cooperatives and women leaders to ensure a participatory foundation
- Carry out training in participatory governance and fair value chain negotiation.
- Pilot the use of a “diagnostic scorecard” with 10–12 cooperatives to determine the most critical areas for capacity building before designing a full WHIP.
- Follow an approach where certification is a long-term aspiration, but not a precondition for engagement
- Persuade private sector actors to commit to co-funding improvements, particularly in processing and value-added product development, without passing costs onto producers
- Develop a simple traffic-light system co-designed with harvesters to visually represent progress on indicators like biodiversity, earnings, governance, and well-being.

ADVANTAGES OF USING A WHIPS APPROACHING THE PILOT PROJECTS

2.1 Supporting collaboration between producers operating in a shared landscape

One of the key advantages of the WHIP framework is its ability to foster collaboration among producers who share a common harvesting landscape but lack the individual capacity to meet certification standards.

In Uzbekistan, for instance, the liquorice sector in Karakalpakstan is made up of numerous small-scale producers and processors who are geographically dispersed and face significant barriers to certification. It was reported that a WHIP has potential in this region as a pathway to certification to support these producers operating in a shared landscape who do not have the financial or administrative capacity to become certified individually. To meet stringent international standards, these producers would need to make significant changes i.e., overhauling harvesting methods, investing in traceability systems, and ensuring ecological sustainability, to their operations. Only at the end of the process would they reap the benefits of certification. A WHIP is therefore a potentially useful tool during this transitional phase.

In Morocco, a similar potential for collaborative benefit was identified among argan oil cooperatives. Many of the cooperatives expressed openness to working together to improve their economic situation. Specifically, they recognised the advantages of consolidating supply in order to fulfil larger orders and access higher-value markets. They described how a group of cooperatives could sell argan oil in larger quantities and take on larger orders. In addition, larger quantities are also more appealing to international buyers who prioritise consistent supply and traceability.

2.2 Promotion of community-led governance and control of sourcing areas, with adequate benefit sharing mechanisms and social safeguarding

A core value of the WHIP approach is its emphasis on inclusive development—ensuring that social safeguards are in place and that economic benefits are distributed fairly among those involved in wild harvesting and processing. The collaborative approach in the WHIP framework presents an opportunity to rebalance power within wild plant and fungi value chains by promoting community-led governance and more equitable control over sourcing areas.

In Morocco, due to the changing market structures, cooperatives have limited possibilities to buy argan fruit directly from collectors, and sales through middlemen result in even higher prices. Wages in the cooperatives visited were well below the Moroccan minimum wage and the interviewees were not aware of the current market value of argan oil, for example in Europe. The cooperatives surveyed would like to see a reorganisation of the market, direct access to argan fruit and higher selling prices to maintain argan production as a tradition and source of income. Lack of experience in commercialisation, marketing and management can be addressed in a WHIP by enabling cooperatives to engage with relevant stakeholders, including industry representatives and trade associations. Avoiding middlemen may prove challenging due to the rigid market structures but there are a few examples of economically successful associations of argan oil cooperatives, such as the Union of Argan Oil Women Cooperatives (UCFA), which (with external support) has developed its own marketing platform and markets argan oil and argan oil products without intermediarie⁹.

2.3 WHIPs can be used as a diagnostic tool to identify areas for improvement

Applying the WHIP framework can be a useful tool to identify challenges and opportunities for the sustainable harvest of wild plants, and to determine whether a WHIP, and/or certification, is the best course of action for the context of this supply chain.

⁹ <https://www.wecf.org/best-practice-example-alternative-finance-models-for-argan-oil-cooperatives-in-morocco/>

For example, in Uzbekistan, the preparatory research demonstrated that the main challenges to enabling sustainable harvest and trade at present is that harvesters did not want to share information on collection methods with each other, which indicates a barrier to collaboration. A WHIP would also need to secure support of the local authorities, as at present harvesters do not feel comfortable sharing information with external parties given that harvest is sometimes in contravention with regulations. In Morocco, some argan oil cooperatives have experienced “certification fatigue” due to overlapping or burdensome requirements (organic, fair trade, etc.) with little return. A WHIP could be an opportunity for cooperatives to focus on improvements rather than certification, and can provide an opportunity to explore certification options, and the pros and cons of engaging with different schemes, throughout the WHIP implementation.

LIMITATIONS OF USING A WHIPS APPROACH IN THE PILOT PROJECTS

3.1 Producers may not be willing to collaborate or share information needed for a WHIP

A collaborative and transparent approach is a key element of the WHIP framework. This requires harvesting operations to be open to such collaborations, and to sharing information with other stakeholders, and in their public commitments to the WHIP. In some contexts, it may be challenging to secure the level of trust needed for this approach to be successful.

For example, in Uzbekistan, the Karakalpakstan liquorice sector is currently a low-trust environment with considerable state presence. A WHIP necessarily involves strong collaboration between stakeholders across the target landscape but during on the ground research as part of the WHIPs pilot project, liquorice producers displayed only modest willingness to engage with each other in this way, and were secretive when it came to key details of their operations such as their post-harvest replanting activities. This is exacerbated by the inflexible regulatory environment that producers operate in. A not-insignificant proportion of producers are operating in breach of regulatory standards (i.e., illegally) and deploy secretiveness to evade discovery and fines. Embarking on a WHIP could present an opportunity to start building trust and collaboration.

3.2 The cost of a WHIP could perhaps be more effectively used to pursue certification

Both a WHIP, and pursuit of certification, require funding. In some instances, such funds might be more efficiently spent directly on certifying products from wild plants and fungi, where market and demand is established. Implementing a WHIP would cost time and money, including administration costs and time (potentially several months) spent negotiating the collaboration and information-sharing arrangements with all producers and other partners. An alternative is for a producer to be funded throughout the process of preparing for certification through an existing recognized certification scheme. This process would possibly involve similar costs, including in terms of producer effort and staff time. Direct financing of certification is a common approach for large brands who decide, due to market and consumer demand, to have their pre-existing suppliers certified. This may, however, be challenging in the context of Uzbekistan, where most exports of liquorice are currently to companies in China, as large brands in China are less likely to finance certification. In the contrary, WHIPs approach could create a level-playing field and support producers with embarking on measured sustainability improvement journey without the commitment to certification.

3.3 Unclear if WHIP products would appeal to importers

WHIPs are a novel and unrecognised concept in certification. As a result, it is not yet clear if products that have been involved in the WHIPS process would appeal to importers and other supply chain actors. This requires active investigation, possibly through further market research.

ANNEX 3. A COLLABORATION PLAYBOOK FOR WILD PLANT HARVESTING IMPROVEMENT

The Wild Plant Harvesting improvement project has explored how to increase environmental and social benefits in wild plant and fungi harvesting communities. Successful partnership and multi-stakeholder working is essential to creating long lasting changes and improvements for those who harvest and the communities they come from. Wild Harvesting Improvement projects can be initiated by the private sector, government, civil society and local communities, and ideally involve all stakeholders within a landscape committed to constructive and progressive improvements to environmental and social improvements.

The following principles have been developed as a foundation for collaboration and multi-stakeholder working. All stakeholders can refer back to these to encourage positive collaboration and effective outcomes during development of a WHIP.

1. Evidence based and science-grounded	We will use evidence to inform wild plant and fungi harvesting improvements and prioritise activities that have demonstrated impact and are grounded in sound science to ensure effective and sustainable outcomes.
2. Led by harvesting communities	Initiatives for improvements will be led by harvester community needs as defined by them, ideally within a framework of national government, business and civil society support.
3. Rights based	We will be rights based and recognize the need to improve human rights for harvester communities, business employees and others in the wild harvesting ecosystem.
4. Inclusive	We will be open to engagement from all interested stakeholders that show commitment to improvements. We will be inclusive and ensure participation of all, particularly marginalized groups such as women, disabled and ethnic minorities.
5. Transparent in our operations	We will be transparent in our operations and share information on our practices where appropriate, under chatham house/non-competitive rules if needs be.
6. Committed to ethical action and integrity	We are committed to ethical actions and integrity in our personal and professional activities. We will hold each other accountable and work with those who demonstrate commitment to ethical business activity.
7. Considerate communication	We will communicate considerately, particularly when there is disagreement ensuring that the views and opinions of everyone are taken into consideration.
8. Mutual respect	We will operate in an environment of mutual respect for each other.
9. Do no harm	We will do no harm.

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