IUCN
The World Conservation Union

NORTH AFRICA BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME, PHASE III

INTERNAL REVIEW

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Final Report

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Cover photo: *Salvia officinalis* (sage), used for colds, sore throat, asthma, etc.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the support of SDC, IUCN has been engaged since 1996 in a programme aimed at promoting: A) the conservation of biodiversity in North Africa, B) a network of institutions from the region in support of this objective, and C) the role of women in biodiversity conservation. The programme is carried out by IUCN State and NGO Members in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Phase III of the IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme covers the period of 1 November 2001 to 31 October 2004, with a budget over the three years of CHF 1'910'000. Of this, the project budget for each of the five implementing countries is on the order of CHF 60'000 per annum. In many countries, the projects also benefit from co-funding secured locally (in cash or in kind). The overall objectives of Phase III are to:

1. Promote the conservation of endangered and economically useful plants in North Africa, with special reference to medicinal and economically useful plants.
2. Promote indigenous knowledge and the equitable participation of people in the management and conservation of endangered and economically useful plants in North Africa.

This internal review, midway through Phase III, aims to examine the:

- project design
- expectations and perceptions of IUCN, partners, SDC
- feasibility of continuing the project for the remainder of Phase III – including capacity of the implementers, opportunities for refocusing the project, and synergies with the IUCN Mediterranean Programme
- management from IUCN Headquarters
- factors supporting effective delivery, and

to provide recommendations to guide the remainder of Phase III.

The review mission visited all five countries in North Africa, over a period of 24 days, and met with 116 respondents from the different respondent groups (the project team, IUCN staff, national and regional partners and IUCN Members, Swiss embassies and SDC, and project beneficiaries).

It is clear that with only a few days in each country, and very limited time for data analysis, it is impossible for an evaluator to independently verify all of the information collected. An evaluation of this type is a snapshot, based on field visits and especially on discussions with the all of the individuals encountered. With this information, it is the responsibility of the consultant to analyse and present the findings in a way that is as balanced, impartial and accurate as possible, given the limitations of what one can learn in such a short time. This was particularly challenging in this project, which unfortunately, is characterized in some places by strong personality conflicts among the various respondents. In an effort to correct any misunderstandings, a draft report was circulated to the IUCN Secretariat and to the National Coordinators in each country, and their comments were gratefully taken into consideration in the preparation of this final report.

A brief summary of the findings are as follows:

- The project design is essentially sound, relevant, and realistic. However, it is not clear how the various activities contribute to the achievement of an overall goal.
- The project in Algeria has many achievements to its credit: pilot projects have been set up on three women-run farms to cultivate relatively large quantities of medicinal plants; active work at the Batna field station on the experimental nursery, seed bank, specimen collection and production of environmental education materials; experiments on reproducing medicinal plants are also being carried out at the botanical garden in Algiers; according to the Compendium Editor, very good monographs have been contributed to the Compendium.
- In Egypt, the project is essentially based on ex situ conservation of medicinal plants. A Centre for Conservation of Endangered Plants has been built, and a garden is underway to grow threatened and endangered plants. Four Bedouin micro-nurseries produce hard-to-find

plants for the garden, and the traditional knowledge of the Bedouin is being gathered and documented. The project is also supporting phytochemical research, investigations on the status of medicinal plants in the project area near El Hammam, and according to the Editor, good contributions have been made to the Compendium.

- Progress has been solid, but slow in Libya. Researchers and students are gathering traditional knowledge, especially from women. Seed collection and reproduction trials of endangered plants are ongoing at two experimental stations near Abu-Ghailan NP. Other work includes: gathering field data on endangered plants, herbarium specimens, experiments in phytochemistry, and environmental education. Monographs for the Compendium are behind schedule, and no contribution has been made to the Gender Newsletter. IUCN provided training in January 2002 to EGA staff to develop a regional medicinal plants database, but there has not been much follow-up so far.
- Excellent progress is being made in Morocco in a project that is closely linked to plant conservation in one of Morocco's most prestigious protected areas, Toubkal NP: determination of threatened and endangered medicinal and aromatic plant species in the park; collection and documentation of traditional knowledge; analysis of the active ingredients in medicinal plants; experiments to determine anti-microbial activities of medicinal plants from the park; promotion of ecotourism; afforestation in the buffer zone with 10'000 carob trees; community cultivation of iris as a source of additional revenue; awareness-raising; many publications produced, and according to the Editor very good monographs contributed to the Compendium.
- The project in Tunisia is operating according to a different workplan than the one in the agreed project document. In relation to the activity framework of the project document – i.e., the project's contractual obligations – to date no progress has yet been made in Tunisia with respect to medicinal plants in Phase III. The observations made by the review from a brief visit to the project site of Phase II call into question whether there were lasting results from Phase II in Tunisia in terms the conservation of medicinal plants. According to the Compendium Editor, contributions to the Compendium from the expert in Tunisia have not been adequate.
- At the level of the regional coordination, results include: training workshop organised in participatory approaches and gender; Committee of Experts and Gender Network set up; Gender Newsletter drafted. There have also been disappointments with regard to the regional coordination, for example: the lack of progress in disseminating and sharing knowledge; no visible progress on the project web site; delays in producing monographs for the Compendium, and inadequate monitoring of progress in the national and regional projects. There are multiple reasons for this, and a number of operational recommendations to improve the regional coordination are given in Annex I.
- Largely because of the constraints of the very limited human resources in the regional programme at IUCN HQ, management and technical support has not met expectations.

In Morocco and Libya, the project activities are closely linked with conserving medicinal plants in situ. In Algeria, Libya and Egypt, the project has made important advances in scientific and agronomic experiments to reproduce and cultivate wild medicinal plants. This is an essential pre-requisite for moving from wild harvests to the cultivation of medicinal plants by rural communities.

However, the project approach to development seems to be lacking in sophistication – while tangible support is important, it is not the distribution of equipment alone (e.g., improved stoves) that will generate long-term sustainable development.

This project is being implemented in a particularly challenging context. According to Prescott-Allen (2001), the North Africa region "is regressing environmentally almost as much as it is developing socio-economically". There is an urgent need to monitor biodiversity at the national and local levels, and to develop action plans for conservation and sustainable use.

The project is very relevant to the needs of IUCN Members and partners in the region, and provides an opportunity to learn about the relationships between conservation and development. It also provides an opportunity for Members to develop a collective voice with respect to biodiversity and the implementation of the CBD. The theme of medicinal plants is well chosen, as it provides a good entry point for biodiversity conservation in general. Medicinal plants are important for the people of North Africa, especially in rural areas.

There are specific challenges to management and implementation in all of the countries:

- In Algeria, serious bureaucratic hurdles at the ANN have compromised project effectiveness.
- In Egypt, implementation would benefit from a more multi-disciplinary team, including professionals in protected areas and land use management, and development and gender specialists.
- To improve implementation in Libya, emphasis should be placed on communicating more and on delivering results on schedule.
- In Morocco, there has been a blockage with the gender component, but this should be able to be resolved by mainstreaming gender into the core project activities.
- In Tunisia, IUCN may wish to consider working with a different implementing organisation.
- The regional coordination would benefit from more active technical and management support from IUCN.

While the project can be implemented as designed, there may be value in rethinking the design. To this end, one could base the review of the redesign on a few key avenues, e.g.,:

- Investing greater efforts in those activities and areas which are promising, for example Algeria for medicinal plant farming and gender integration, and Morocco and Libya for the integration of in-situ and ex-situ conservation.
- Documenting and distilling learning from the best practice in these areas, and using this for wider capacity building in the region, with links as well to contemporary IUCN initiatives in South East Asia, Sri Lanka and East Africa.
- Expanding the network of partners in all countries of the region to include those directly involved in the project implementation plus others who have an interest in and would benefit from learning about the project. Those network participants who are not IUCN members may be encouraged to become members, since in the longer term, this would be a key to promoting the sustainability of the project results in the region.
- Using resources that may be freed up from focusing the project on select activities, for strengthening the regional and global dimensions of the project, for example,
    - the economic feasibility of cultivating medicinal plants,
    - the impact of farm cultivation and commercialisation on in situ conservation,
    - the sustainability of trade in medicinal plants
    - policy implications of legal and illegal trade in medicinal plants across the countries, and
    - documenting contributions of the project to the implementation of the CBD, etc.

Other interesting opportunities are presented in report sections 5.6.

The review makes a number of strategic recommendations in chapter 6. In addition, operational recommendations are included in Annex I on page 60. Of all the recommendations, the top six priorities are:

1. The IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme should be continued, and extended for an additional year to allow for the delays that have been encountered so far. The project has very good prospects of producing results which the implementing organisations, IUCN, and SDC can all be proud of (the Compendium, the Best Practices Guide, the web site, the lessons learned from the site projects, etc.). IUCN HQ and the Regional Coordination will need to invest substantial efforts to accompany the process, and take a more active role to ensure that these results are achieved.

2. It would be good to reschedule the regional meeting that had been planned for December 2002 for as soon as possible, so that the project can regain its momentum.

3. Since in Tunisia, there is a question whether the project, as presently implemented, will deliver satisfactory results, IUCN may wish to explore alternative implementation arrangements for the remainder of Phase III. One possibility may be to develop a revised implementation plan with IUCN's state member, the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources. In planning the work in Tunisia for the remainder of the project, realism will be especially important, given the limited time frame and budget.

4. In order to avoid the administrative delays that are presently compromising the work in Algeria, the project management needs immediate change. The best solution would be for IUCN to address the project contract for the second year of Phase III to the present National Coordinator, Mr Tewfik Meftah under the auspices of the Mouvement Ecologique Algérien.

5. In Morocco it would be good for SPANA to take responsibility for the entire budget, including gender; capacity exists in the project site to work effectively with women; however, this capacity needs to be strengthened to address gender issues in their wider, more strategic sense. Gender should be mainstreamed into the project activities, as has been done in Algeria.

6. IUCN should look for ways to follow up on the many opportunities that exist in North Africa to expand its membership, and to build the capacity of Members.

Based on the outcome of this review, it was possible to identify some of the factors supporting effective conservation delivery, namely:

- A competent, motivated team, which is able to work together in close collaboration.
- A multi-disciplinary team, combining skills in: project management, botany, pharmacology, ethnobotany, agronomy, protected area restoration and management, community conservation, participatory approaches, and gender (skills in conservation science would be a good addition).
- National Coordinators who understand the challenges of delivering on biodiversity conservation, who are excellent managers, and who delegate with confidence to their teams.
- Seamless integration of women into the project strategy in terms of project staffing and the identification of beneficiaries.
- A strategic approach to the identification of the project area, so that the project can work effectively with women.
- Genuine presence at the field level.
- Good contacts with people in the field and with local authorities.

The IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme is essentially a good project, which has achieved considerable results (though reporting has been poor), in spite of implementation problems that have arisen. We are confident that, with the necessary corrective steps, the project has every opportunity to achieve its worthwhile potential in the remainder of Phase III.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am deeply grateful to you all.

Meg Gawler
April 2003

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANN	Agence Nationale pour la conservation de la Nature (Algeria)
ANTPFS	Association Nationale Tunisienne de la Protection de la Faune Sauvage
ASRT	Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (Egypt)
ATPNE	Association Tunisienne pour la Protection de la Nature et de l'Environnement
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CGCEP	The Centre and Garden for Conservation of Endangered Plants (Egypt)
CHF	Swiss francs
DT	Tunisian dinars
EGA	Environment General Authority (Libya)
FCIL	Fonds canadiens d'initiatives locales
FEM	Fonds pour l'environnement mondial
FIAP	Fonds d'insertion et d'adaptation professionnelle (Tunisia)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HQ	Headquarters
IAV	Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II (Morocco)
IPA	Important Plant Areas
IPRs	Intellectual Property Rights
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEA	Mouvement Ecologique Algérien
NABP	North Africa Biodiversity Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Park
PAOTIC	Programme d'Appui aux Organisations de Base en Tunisie d'InterCoopération
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SPANA	Société Protectrice des Animaux et de la Nature (Morocco)
SSC	Species Survival Commission
UCD	Unité de Conservation et de Développement de la faune et de la flore (ANN, Algeria)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFT	Union de Femmes Tunisiennes
WESCANA	West and Central Asia and North Africa (IUCN)
WON	Wellbeing of Nations
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (World Wildlife Fund in US and Canada)

North Africa Biodiversity Programme, Phase III

Internal Review

1. CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

1.1. RATIONALE FOR THE REVIEW

This review was prompted by IUCN's concerns over the progress and implementation of Phase III of the IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme (NABP), which is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Midway through this third phase, it appeared that the project was substantially under-spent, and that some of the expected results were not being delivered. In addition, the first progress reports were not up to IUCN standards.

The Director of the Global Programme, and the West and Central Asia and North Africa (WESCANA) Programme decided to undertake an internal review by an independent consultant in order to provide advice on improvements to the current project focus, management and operations, and to identify opportunities for future programming, networking and capacity building in North Africa.

1.2. BRIEF PROJECT HISTORY

With the support of SDC, IUCN has been engaged since 1996, with a number of its State and NGO Members, in a programme aimed at promoting: 1) the conservation of biodiversity in North Africa, 2) a network of institutions from the region in support of this objective, and 3) the role of women in biodiversity conservation. The programme is carried out by IUCN Members in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

The first phase (1996-1998) produced the following results:

- Identification of centres of biodiversity
- Publication in Arabic of the Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity
- Identification of important and threatened medicinal plants
- Identification of cheetah habitats in North Africa
- Preparation of 125 biodiversity fact sheets, for use in environmental education.

The second phase (1998-2001) continued working on the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants, conservation of centres of biodiversity, conservation of the cheetah, environmental education and communication, and women and biodiversity. Emphasis was placed on community participation. Phase II produced:

- An updated database of cheetah distribution in North Africa
- Guide to Medicinal Plants in Algeria
- Testing of propagation of medicinal plants
- Publication of the book *Wild Medicinal Plants in Egypt*
- Booklet on biodiversity in Arabic
- Inventory of medicinal plants in Toubkal National Park in Morocco
- Small-scale work with communities, and especially with women (experimental cultivation of medicinal plants, introduction of drying and distillation technology, fuel-efficient stoves, literacy training, etc.)
- Four issues of a regional Gender Newsletter.

In May 2000, an internal evaluation was carried out in a workshop setting, and the priorities and focus for Phase III were agreed, namely to:

- focus on one theme: medicinal plants emphasize working closely together at the regional level
- have one main lead institution in each country instead of two
- integrate women's issues into the activities at the national and regional levels, rather than having separate projects focusing on women's issues, and
- continue the emphasis on community participation.

It was also decided to emphasise the regional aspects of the project, as many of the plant species occur across the region, and work in one country may inform and inspire similar work in another. Phase III would offer great opportunities for promoting learning at the regional level.

1.3. PHASE III

The goals, objectives, activities, and management arrangements for Phase III are detailed in the project proposal submitted to SDC on 26 April 2001. As a brief summary, the major objectives and key deliverables for Phase III are as follows:

Objective 1: Promote the conservation of endangered and economically useful plants in North Africa, with special reference to medicinal and economically useful plants.

- Training in participatory approaches
- Compendium published on indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants
- Promotion of community management approaches
- Organising and disseminating existing knowledge
- Best practice guide published for plant conservation
- Web site for North Africa Biodiversity Programme
- Contributions to policy processes - national, regional and global
- Gender workshop
- Gender analysis of community participation in plant conservation
- Newsletter on women's perspectives
- Methodological and conceptual support to national projects.

Objective 2: Promote indigenous knowledge and the equitable participation of people in the management and conservation of endangered and economically useful plants in North Africa.

- Egypt: plant propagation at the Centre; propagation of endangered medicinal plants among the Bedouin; participatory investigation of perception of threats and opportunities.

- Libya: promote conservation of endangered medicinal and economically useful plants; reinforce participatory approaches.

- Algeria: reinforce participatory approaches; document traditional knowledge.

- Morocco: promote traditional knowledge on medicinal and aromatic plants; improve networks for commercialising medicinal plants; improve revenues for farmers.

- Tunisia: promote traditional knowledge on medicinal and aromatic plants; improve networks for commercialising medicinal plants; improve revenues for farmers.

The contract with SDC for Phase III covers the period of 1 June 2001 to 31 May 2004. The budget over the three years is CHF 1'910'000. Of this, the project budget for each of the five implementing countries is on the order of CHF 60'000 per annum (Egypt received an extra CHF 30'000 in year one for the construction of the Centre for Endangered Plants). Because of a late start-up, SDC agreed to shift the project period to 1 November 2001 to 31 October 2004.

The project is implemented by:

- IUCN for the regional coordination
- the Agence Nationale pour la conservation de la Nature (ANN) in Algeria
- the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) and the University of Cairo in Egypt
- the Environment General Authority (EGA) in Libya
- the Société Protectrice des Animaux et de la Nature (SPANA) in Morocco, and
- the Association Tunisienne pour la Protection de la Nature et de l'Environnement (ATPNE) in Tunisia.

1.4. NORTH AFRICA SITUATION ANALYSIS

Biodiversity is extremely important to the North Africa region, and all five countries have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

In September 2002, the IUCN M&E Initiative carried out a situation analysis of the WESCANA region, focusing on human and ecosystem conditions and trends, based on Sustainability Assessments – the methodology and data of *The Wellbeing of Nations* (WON) report (Prescott-Allen 2001). The most pressing issues in North Africa are water, land, and "community" (rights and freedoms, governance, institutions, peace, crime, civil order). Corruption is a problem throughout the region, and governance an overriding issue. Every country in the region displays a high or extreme "double deficit", i.e., a combination of environmental degradation and human deprivation. North Africa is regressing environmentally almost as much as it is developing socio-economically.

Highlights from the IUCN Situation Analysis, based on the WON report, are presented in the description of the context of the project work in each country. The purpose of providing this information in the report of this internal review is to illustrate the substantial difficulties and challenges of working the various countries in the region.

Protected areas are of particular concern, both in terms of the amount of land protected and the diversity of habitat types protected. Of all the African sub-regions, North Africa protects the least amount of land in the fewest number of sites: 56 sites covering only 1.2% of the land area.

One of the key indicators in the WON report is species and genes – the status of wild species, and wild and domesticated (crop and livestock) populations. However, there is a lack of time-series data on species trends, and global data sets on species and genes are coarse. As a result, biodiversity information systems that include species, genes, and pressures are urgently required as an initial step towards better conservation interventions.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

This evaluation aims to examine the:

- project design – is it appropriate and realistic?
- expectations and perceptions of IUCN, partners, SDC
- feasibility of continuing the project, including:

  - capacity of the implementers
  - opportunities for refocusing the project
  - synergies with the IUCN Mediterranean Programme
- management from IUCN Headquarters
- factors supporting effective delivery, and

to provide recommendations to guide the remainder of Phase III.

The Terms of Reference for the review are given in Annex A.

3. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology included scoping interviews, document review, site visits to the implementing organisations and the project areas, in-depth interviews, group discussions, and a debriefing and feedback session at IUCN HQ. Development of the methodology began with an evaluation matrix (Annex B), wherein the main issues were defined, together with key questions for each issue, specific sub-questions, and the corresponding data sources.

Several versions of an evaluation questionnaire / interview guide were developed for different respondent groups:

- Project team
- IUCN staff
- National and regional partners and IUCN Members
- Swiss embassies and SDC, and
- Project beneficiaries.

In the end, such a structured approach was used mainly for the project team and IUCN staff (see interview guide in Annex C), and other interviews were conducted in a semi-structured style. All interviews addressed the themes of:

- project design
- effectiveness
- implementation
- capacity of the implementing organisation
- opportunities for refocusing the project, and
- recommendations.

The review mission visited all five countries in North Africa, over a period of 24 days, and met with people from the different respondent groups. The Regional Coordinator, Mr Ramzi Mejdoub, participated in the mission in Libya, Morocco, Algeria, and part of Egypt. Mr Mejdoub contributed the technical assessments in Annex G.

Interviews were carried out, both in groups and with individuals, with a total of 116 respondents. It is important to note that rural women in North Africa generally do not speak with men who are not their husbands or family members. As a woman, I potentially had access to meet with women beneficiaries. In an email I sent out to all the National Coordinators in preparation for the mission, I made it clear that I wished to meet with project beneficiaries if possible. However, only one country (Algeria) organised the mission in such a way – i.e., by having a female project team member who could translate accompany me on the field trip – that it was possible to interview rural women. In Tunisia, although accompanied by men, I was able to speak to a few women beneficiaries. This methodological difficulty in Egypt, Libya and Morocco speaks volumes about the difficulties of integrating gender into the project strategies in these countries.

The mission itinerary and timetable and the list of persons consulted are given in Annexes D and E, and a short biography of the evaluator is included as Annex H.

It is clear that with only a few days in each country, and very limited time for data analysis, it is impossible for an evaluator to independently verify all of the information collected. An evaluation of this type is a snapshot, based on field visits and especially on discussions with the all of the individuals encountered. With this information, it is the responsibility of the consultant to analyse and present the findings in a way that is as balanced, impartial and accurate as possible, given the limitations of what one can learn in such a short time. This was particularly challenging in this project, which unfortunately, is characterized in some places by strong personality conflicts among the various respondents.

In an effort to correct any misunderstandings, a draft report was circulated to the IUCN Secretariat and to the National Coordinators in each country, and their comments were gratefully taken into consideration in the preparation of this final report.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. PROJECT DESIGN

In many ways, this project is designed to provide seed funding to develop a strategy and framework for a far more substantial programme of biodiversity conservation in North Africa. The project design is essentially sound, relevant, and realistic. However, it is not clear how the various activities contribute to the achievement of an overall conservation or development goal.

It would be good to link the ongoing project work (monographs, establishment of plant lists, etc.) to a comprehensive analysis of the medicinal/aromatic plants trade and its structures in North Africa, including:

- the role and significance of wild harvests and of cultivation for domestic vs. commercial uses
- traditional aspects with regard to cultivating medicinal and aromatic plants
- analysis of commercial traders in the region,
- lists of species currently in use and species having a future potential for commercialisation, and
- legislative aspects related to harvest and trade.

The overall development goal – contributing to improving the livelihoods of the communities through conservation and sustainable commercial use of medicinal plants – will require stronger expertise and focus.

4.2. ALGERIA

Context

According to the *Wellbeing of Nations* report (Prescott-Allen 2001), Algeria is a high double-deficit country, where environmental degradation is combined with human deprivation. This is due to its low score in terms of community, because of the presence of armed conflict, and limited political rights, press freedom, and civil liberties. In addition, poverty (per capita GDP, unemployment rate, debt) is a problem, as are health and population growth (total fertility rate = 3.7). Ecosystem wellbeing is also threatened by land degradation and loss of forest area.

In Algeria the NABP is implemented by the Agence Nationale pour la conservation de la Nature, in close collaboration with the Mouvement Ecologique Algérien (MEA).

Relevance and Realism

The project is certainly relevant to the Algerian context: most of Algeria's endangered and threatened plants have medicinal properties, and there is an increasing demand for herbal remedies. Many rural communities rely almost exclusively on medicinal plants for treating illnesses, and the urban population is increasingly returning to medicinal plant remedies, as modern medicines have become more and more expensive in recent years.

Herbalists are finding it increasingly difficult to satisfy the local demand for medicinal plants. In addition, there is a high-volume international trade that is posing serious threats to the native flora and to ecosystem health. Truckloads of medicinal plants are uprooted, without any controls whatsoever, and shipped across the border to Niger and elsewhere. Algeria suffers from massive erosion, and the loss of every uprooted plant increases the threat of land degradation.

There is a great deal of traditional knowledge among nomads. However, as nomads become more and more sedentary, they know less and less about their extended habitat. It is important to capture and preserve this knowledge before it is lost.

We reviewed the activity framework with the project team in detail, who confirmed that it is realistic and feasible. A few editorial changes are required in the activities for Algeria:

- Activity 1 should read: « Mise en place d'une ~~banque~~ base de données sur les plantes médicinales. »
- Activity 4 : « Campagne de sensibilisation des communautés sur la raréfaction des ressources ~~eau, bois, fourrage~~ (espèces endémiques, rares et médicinales) »
- Activity 6 : Aménagement hydrauliques dans la Commune de ~~Kachou~~ Timgad. »
- Activity 7 and Expected result 7 should be switched.

Results to Date

In Phase II, a survey of medicinal plants in Algeria was carried out, and published in Arabic in two volumes. In Phase III, the project has achieved very good results to date, in spite of difficult working conditions. Highlights include:

- The fact that the field work is 100% centred on women and biodiversity (Fig. 1).
- Pilot projects have been started in three women-run farms for relatively large-scale cultivation of medicinal plants, with a buyer (a local herbalist) already identified to purchase the entire crop at each site. Each beneficiary has committed to growing medicinal plants in 800 m^2 of her prime arable land (Fig. 2).
- The seed bank at the Batna field station (Fig. 3).
- The specimen collection at the Batna field station (Fig. 4).
- The nursery at the Batna field station experimenting on reproducing and cultivating medicinal plants (Figs. 5 and 6).
- Environmental education materials produced on medicinal plants (posters, brochures, specimens, seeds, etc.) (Fig. 7).
- The botanical garden at ANN HQ, also with experiments on medicinal and economically useful plants (Fig. 8).
- Very good monographs have been contributed to the Compendium, according to the Editor.

Further information on the results in Algeria can be found in the technical report by the Regional Coordinator in Annex G.

Fig. 1. Project engineer, Zehjra Yahiaoui, with beneficiary, Messaaouda Salhi. Tarkate, Algeria.

Fig. 2. Commercial cultivation of medicinal plants by Mme Salhi. Tarkate, Algeria.

Fig. 3. Seed bank at the ANN field station. Batna, Algeria.

Fig. 4. Specimen collection at the ANN field station. Batna, Algeria.

Fig. 5. Nursery at the ANN field station, experimenting on reproducing and cultivating medicinal plants. Batna, Algeria.

Fig. 6. Experiment in growing *Artemisia absinthium* from cuttings. Batna, Algeria.

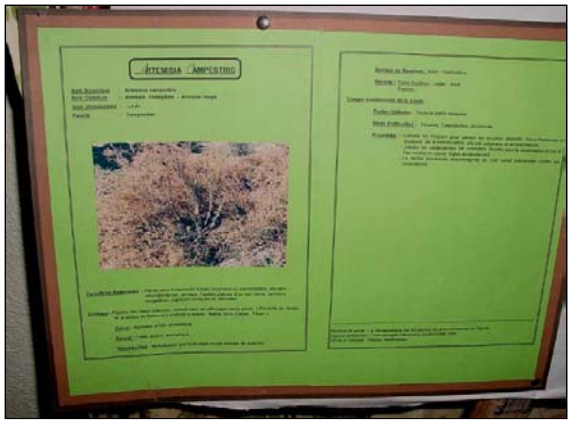

Fig. 7. Medicinal plant monographs for environmental education. Batna, Algeria.

Fig. 8. Botanical garden at ANN HQ, also with experiments on medicinal and economically useful plants, Algiers, Algeria.

Selection of the beneficiaries for the three pilot projects was based on a strategic assessment and consultations with local authorities. The community of Timgad, near the ANN field station at Batna, was chosen for its relative openness to empowering women. Then the project carried out interviews and worked closely with the local authorities to select three women farmers willing to take the risk of dedicating a substantial portion of their farmland to growing medicinal plants. The plants selected for cultivation are: *Artemisia absinthium, Artemisia herba-alba, Lavendula officinalis, Rosmarinus officinalis, and Salvia officianalis.* If these projects produce economic benefits, this will provide a launching pad for awareness raising and rural development

Since these pilot farmers were giving up land to grow medicinal plants with untried potential to generate revenues, when they could have grown familiar food crops, substantial development incentives were necessary to encourage them to take the risk (improvements to irrigation, fruit trees, beehives, etc.)

The project investment in each farm is on the order of CHF 3'800. Clearly, it would be prohibitive cost-wise to try to replicate this scheme with similar incentives at a large scale. However, if the pilot projects demonstrate the economic benefits of cultivating medicinal plants, it is likely that word will quickly spread, and if there is sufficient market demand, then the pilot projects could be replicated with greatly reduced incentives.

Management and Implementation

Although good progress has been made, there have been serious bureaucratic problems at the ANN that have caused delays of several months in purchasing materials needed for the project. Unless a solution can be found, these delays threaten to paralyse the project and compromise its credibility.

Capacity of the Implementing Organisation

Both the government department of the Agence Nationale pour la conservation de la Nature and the partner NGO, the Mouvement Ecologique Algérien have reputations of having good, intelligent and competent people. In Algeria, the strengths include their broad conservation interest and agenda, and their genuine openness to working with women.

Opportunities

While the work in Algeria is exemplary in many ways, there seem to be some shortcomings in the project strategy, e.g.:

- There is no obvious direct connection with in situ conservation or protected areas.
- There has not been a study to assess the trade in medicinal plants in the Batna area, including local and international demand, and the present and potential impacts of the trade on species in the wild. It is not obvious what effect increasing the cultivation of medicinal plants will have on plants in the wild.

There are excellent opportunities for collaborating with the private sector in Algeria. For example, SAIDAL, a medical research company, with a department devoted to medicinal plants, is keenly interested in being able to acquire cultivated plants of high quality for experiments and for the extraction of essential oils. SAIDAL is based in Algiers, but is developing its branch in Batna. They have offered to analyse samples that the project would send in.

At the national level, plant inventories are sorely needed for Algeria's protected areas.

4.3. EGYPT

Context

According to the WON report, Egypt has the highest Wellbeing Index, and the highest Wellbeing / Stress Index of the five North Africa countries. Nevertheless, it still falls into the high double-deficit performance group. Egypt is characterised by low per capita GDP; poor political rights, civil liberties and press freedom; and highly unsustainable water withdrawal as a percentage of internal supply.

Egypt, with its long history of science and research, is an intellectual and academic motor in North Africa.

The site area, near the coast, west of Alexandria, is characterised by intensive strip development. In a continuous band for 120 km, the Egyptian coast has been totally transformed into intensive summer-home apartment housing developments, surrounded by continuous walls which block public access to the beach, and interactions between the sea and the coastal lands. Every summer two million Egyptians flock to these complexes for their holidays. The coastal ridges have been quarried for building materials, destroying the habitat of rocky-land species. In addition, the coastal dunes, together with their species and the ecological interactions between the sea and the inland areas, have been completely lost.

Of the 2000 species of plants in Egypt, 1000 occur within 30 km of the Mediterranean coast. A large number of Egypt's plants have become rare or extinct in Egypt, due to habitat destruction, overgrazing, and overharvesting. The conservation of medicinal plants is a component of Egypt's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

In Egypt, the IUCN NABP is implemented by the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology and the University of Cairo.

Relevance and Realism

Most Egyptians rely on modern medicines, though herbalists and their shops are still thriving. The Bedouins, with a much stronger traditional culture, have a real interest in medicinal plants – they collect them and use them. There is a big demand for medicinal plants in Egypt, but most of this is for export to the USA and Europe.

Members of the Egyptian Society for Curing with Herbs and Medicinal Plants are interested in documenting their knowledge and in protecting intellectual property rights (IPRs). Because their sources in the wild are disappearing, they say they are ready to invest in the conservation of medicinal plants.

The project activity framework was checked in detail with the National Coordinator, and found to be realistic.

Results to Date

Phase I saw the publication of *Wild Medicinal Plants in Egypt: An Inventory to Support Conservation and Sustainable Use*.

Highlights of the results from Phase III include:

- The Centre for Conservation of Endangered Plants (CGCEP) has been built (Figs. 9 and 10), with a separate gardener's room at the entrance.
- The Garden is underway with different soils for different types of threatened plants (Figs. 11 and 12).
- Four small Bedouin "micro-nurseries" (Figs. 13 and 14) raise awareness and provide medicinal plants for local needs and hard-to-find plants for the Garden.
- A new NGO has been created with researchers, herbalists and healers (the Egyptian Society for Curing with Herbs and Medicinal Plants).
- Traditional knowledge is being gathered and documented. Most of the project researchers are women, and so can carry out ethnobotanical research with Bedouin ladies). So far the team has visited 32 households, and documented 46 plants (scientific and Arabic names, medicinal uses, preparations, etc.). These results will feed into the Compendium.
- Phytochemical research is being carried out by the team in Cairo to determine which compounds are responsible for which medicinal actions.
- Investigations are underway on the status and distribution of, and threats to medicinal plants in the project area.
- Endemic species have been identified.
- According to the Editor, good contributions have been made to the Compendium.

Restoration of wild areas is seen as too difficult (and it is true the project budget is extremely limited), and so the emphasis of the project has been on the multiplication of medicinal plants in nurseries and gardens, and on collecting ethnobotanical information from the Bedouin.

Management and Implementation

As the project is implemented by a government institution (the ASRT), administrative procedures are quite lengthy. Government rules require that receipts be validated by 6-8 signatures. When the National Coordinator submits his financial reports, he includes only receipts that are validated. However, there generally are a number of other expenditures that have been made, and for which the receipts are still circulating in the system. Thus, the financial report with only the validated receipts does not give the full picture of project expenditure to date. Because of this, the needs for disbursement have been underestimated.

The project in Egypt has benefited from financial and in-kind contributions from the ASRT, and from a land grant by the government of Matruh for the Garden and Centre.

The project's gender focal point in Egypt is a researcher in medicinal plants. Contact with the Bedouins is not easy, because of their conservative culture. The women however are interested in learning how to harvest medicinal plants in the wild, how to plant them, and how to condition them after harvest. The National Coordinator has created a "Gender Group" of researchers (6 women and 4 men), whose function is to gather ethnobotanical information from women. The group meets every month, and benefits from the sharing of ideas.

Capacity of the Implementing Organisation

The lead organisations in Egypt – the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, and the University of Cairo – are well resourced, and provide leadership for the project on the scientific aspects of medicinal plants. The project benefits from the dedication and commitment of the National Coordinator. The National Coordinator is also taking on a major responsibility at the regional level of the project, as the Editor of the Compendium.

Fig. 9. National Coordinator, Kamal Batanouny, with one of his favourite rare plants, *Hyoscyamus albus*. El Hammam, Egypt.

Fig. 10. The Centre and Garden for Conservation of Endangered Plants nears completion. El Hammam, Egypt.

Fig. 11. Medicinal plants endangered in Egypt are grown in the CGCEP. *Artemisia herba-alba* is used for nervous troubles, parasites, hemorrhagic wounds, burns, abscesses, etc. It is also used as a plant insecticide, and a veterinary parasiticide.

Fig. 12. *Colchicum ritchii*, a rare endemic species from the dune ecosystem is fruiting in the Garden. This plant is used for: arthritis, rheumatism, gout, abdominal colics, etc.

Fig. 13. Bedouin nursery. Mr Kremish, one of the earliest project collaborators, has been growing *Artemisia* for ten years for his own use. He is the CGCEP's main source for wild *Artemisia* and *Teucrium*. Near El Hammam, Egypt.

Fig. 14. A new Bedouin nursery. Mr Sabri (right) is the Local Project Coordinator. Near El Hammam, Egypt.

While the implementing organisations in Egypt are particularly strong in the scientific aspects of medicinal plants conservation, as with any scientific endeavour, they would benefit from international peer review, which has been a shortcoming of the project in the present and previous phases. In addition, the ASRT and the University scientists involved with the project have much less experience and conceptual preparation in development issues. The team in Egypt is heavily weighted with plant scientists, and could benefit perhaps from additional expertise in gender and socio-economic issues.

The project team comprises many researchers in Cairo, and a number of Bedouins in the El Hammam area. There is clearly a good collaboration with the Bedouins.

Opportunities

The project emphasis is entirely on ex situ conservation, and there seems to be no visible strategy for addressing the many threats to plants in Egypt (overcollection for fuelwood, for medicinal plants, and for research; overgrazing; massive unplanned tourism development and urbanisation; quarries; erosion, etc.). Thus far, the project has collected ethnobotanical knowledge from Bedouins in the northern areas along the coast west of Alexandria, where people primarily use modern medicine. The plan now is to go into the poorer southern areas, where people rely more on medicinal plants, and to talk especially with older women, and with women hakims.

Although at present female researchers collect traditional knowledge from women, there is no active participation of Bedouin women at the field level, and this should be improved.

Another avenue of effort could be the development of intellectual property rights (IPR) legislation for the Bedouin.

Promoting the cultivation of medicinal plants in Egypt involves a number of challenges and risks, e.g.,:

- water availability

- availability of seeds and cuttings of medicinal plants (domestication of wild plants takes time)
- the need for training and extension programmes in cultivation techniques
- the need to identify markets
- the need for control at every step so that collection from the wild is not encouraged.

The trade in medicinal plants deserves to be studied, including the local, national and international flows, especially trade with Libya and exports to the US and Europe.

Another opportunity that is being pursued by the project involves looking into how traditional methods of resource use (land, water harvesting, irrigation, soil conservation) could be incorporated into land use management inside and outside of protected areas. There are many interesting examples, such as the Nabathian method of water-saving irrigation using clay pots, or the "hilf" tradition in the Sinai where grazing was not allowed until the first apricot fruit was ripe – this permitted desert plants to produce their seeds before grazing started.

4.4. LIBYA

Context

Libyan Arab Jamhiriya, according to the WON report, is an extreme double-deficit country, with the lowest Wellbeing Index and the lowest Wellbeing/Stress Index in North Africa. Community in Libya is rated very low because of terrorism, and extremely limited political rights, civil liberties and press freedom. Health and population growth are a concern (total fertility rate = 3.7). In terms of ecosystems, Libya is rated poorly for water because of massive water withdrawals in relation to supply; for air because of emissions of CO_2 and ozone-depleting substances; and for land, with 76% of the land area degraded, and very little in protected areas. Libya is also much more isolated than the other countries in the region.

In Libya, the NABP is implemented by the government (Environment General Authority), in close collaboration with the University of Al-Faateh, and the Department of Agriculture.

Relevance and Realism

The project, as it is conceived, is relevant to the Libyan context. Especially in rural areas, people rely primarily on medicinal plants for treating health problems. Because people care about them, medicinal plants are an excellent entry point for biodiversity conservation in general. In addition, the work the project has been doing to collect and document indigenous knowledge on medicinal plants is making a real contribution to conserving Libya's cultural and biological heritage. The great majority of both endangered and ecologically important plants in Libya have medicinal properties, and so the scientific work the project is doing to learn how to germinate, propagate, transplant, and cultivate these species will be critical to efforts to restore Libya's degraded ecosystems.

People use medicinal plants, and realise that they are over-used, but they never thought they could cultivate them. Thus, this project is introducing some new ideas.

One question mark in the project design regards the commercialisation of medicinal plants. This is a double-edged sword, which could, on the one hand, promote the conservation of these species by increasing their economic value to people, but on the other hand, could exacerbate the existing threats from overcollection from the wild to supply the trade demand. Many medicinal plant species have become commercially extinct in Egypt, and traders come to Libya to buy medicinal plants by the truckload for sale in Egypt. There are also some cultural barriers to commercialisation, at least among the healers. Old ladies who dispense medicinal plants as remedies will not accept money for this, as

they believe the cure will not work, and God will not be pleased, if they take money for the plants. Their reward is when the person gets well. Likewise, one old lady refused to teach a young student about medicinal plants, because the young woman wanted to make money from this activity.

We examined the project Activity Framework together with the project team, and concluded that in Libya, the expected results are in general quite realistic and feasible. Difficulties may be encountered in fully implementing the participatory approach in the Libyan context, where there some government officials are reluctant to introduce people to the project site. However, the project team is convinced of the value of the participatory approach, and is committed to promoting this as much as they can.

The National Coordinator pointed out that the deliverable on page 28 of the project proposal,

> *"A participatory investigation of livelihood opportunities, production and commercialisation options for medicinal plants will be conducted. Plant characteristics will be identified and production and commercialisation techniques and options explored. Training will be provided for the implementation of commercial options identified"*

is not realistic because it is too early, and perhaps too risky, to begin commercialising medicinal plants. Rather, the project will try to raise awareness on how dangerous it is to export medicinal plants to neighbouring countries, particularly Egypt.

Results to Date

Our field visit confirmed good results to date (see technical assessment in Annex G). We visited two sites from the Western Mountain area where botanists and graduate students collect medicinal plants, and two nurseries in Abu-Ghailan National Park where experiments are carried out growing medicinal and ecologically important plants from seeds or cuttings from the wild, and transplanting them back to natural settings. The project nurseries are the source of plant materials for restoration work in the park. Thus, the work in Libya is making a strong connection between ex situ and in situ conservation.

Highlights of the project results include:

- Gathering traditional knowledge, especially from women (by women researchers).
- Seed collection and reproduction trials of endangered plants at two experimental stations near Abu-Ghailan NP (Figs. 15, 16, 17, and 18). The germination and transplanting trials are carried out in an organised way, with standardized data collection and lessons learned.
- Field data is being collected on endangered plants.
- Herbarium specimens have been prepared (Fig 19.).
- Laboratory experiments in phytochemistry are being carried out at the university.
- Environmental education programmes (Fig. 20). There is a great interest in medicinal plants, and an education workshop was extended to 11 days: 4 days of lectures, and 7 days of hands-on learning about the plants.
- Radio talk shows have been planned for medicinal plants, with a text prepared for each species, and live questions and answers about the featured plant.

The effort of the project is to conserve ecotypes from the area, to preserve the genetic makeup of the plants in the park.

According to the Local Coordinator, before the project, people were not aware of medicinal plants, but now the Department of Agriculture is collecting and growing them, and teaching what they have learned to others. One of the main goals of the project is to raise awareness around the project site, Abu-Ghailan NP. People now come and ask if they can have medicinal plants to cultivate – there has definitely been an increase in the awareness of the importance of medicinal plants.

Fig. 15. The local project team at one of the nurseries. Near Abu-Ghailan NP, Libya.

Fig. 16. Medicinal plants are grown experimentally in the project nursery for transplanting to the wild. Near Abu-Ghailan NP, Libya.

Fig. 17. Another project nursery. Near Tubbi, Libya.

Fig. 18. Reproduction of carob trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*), which has become very rare in Libya. Used to treat infant diarrhea, diabetes, etc. Near Tubbi, Libya.

Fig. 19. Herbarium specimens. Gharian, Libya.

Fig. 20. Environmental education display. Gharian, Libya.

Raising awareness on medicinal plants has actually had an impact locally in promoting a broader interest in conservation. For example, people used to throw their garbage in the wadi, but after being exposed to medicinal plants and conservation, they avoid dumping garbage in the wadi, and actually keep it on their own land, since there are no government facilities for collection.

One respondent said "This project is like light after a long period of darkness. I cannot imagine it stopping. It is a very interesting project for the region and the country."

There are two women medicinal plants experts on the project team. They emphasise listening to local people, and trying to find solutions with them. People's sincerity in Libya is quite striking – most people do not need financial incentives. Because of this, the most effective way to change behaviour is by raising awareness.

IUCN provided training in January 2002 to EGA staff to develop a regional medicinal plants database. However, there has not been much follow-up so far.

Contributions from Libya to the Compendium are behind schedule, compared to Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco. Ten monographs were to have been submitted by each country by December 2002, and Libya has submitted only one.

Participatory and gender approaches are particularly difficult in the Libyan context. Unfortunately there has been no contribution yet from Libya to the Gender Newsletter.

Management and Implementation

Expenditures in Libya are not a good indicator of progress. This is because EGA provides all the money needed for the project activities, and only much later requests reimbursement from IUCN. Nevertheless, EGA is keen to have IUCN support.

According to the National Coordinator, "EGA delegates the work to us, and lets us get on with it. They expect results, and trust us to do our job."

Capacity of the Implementing Organisation

The implementing organisations in Libya – the Environment General Authority, the University of Al-Faateh, and the Department of Agriculture – are strong in terms of staffing, resources, competence, and commitment to conservation. The project team is motivated, and mutually supportive, and there is a good collaboration between the three partners. The Department of Agriculture is implementing the nurseries and protected areas work in the field.

EGA has experience in awareness-raising, and has a standard methodology of measuring awareness work using questionnaires before and after awareness activities.

Opportunities

Honey producers would likely be interested in learning how to grow thyme, as honey from thyme flowers is highly prized, and sells for 150% the price of ordinary honey.

Another suggestion was to find a substitute for *Artemisia*, which is used to clean carpets, and is being overused.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) has become rare in the wild, and is now restricted to hard to access areas. Efforts are being made to collect seeds, and to learn how to reproduce plants in the laboratory and in the field. Once reproduction and transplanting are better understood, and sufficient plant stock is available, restoration in the field will begin.

The project is planning an awareness-raising workshop in the future with students, teachers, Boy Scouts, old people, traders, and women, that would be based on the training received in October 2002 in participatory approaches. It was suggested that the project could give away seedlings at the workshop for people to plant in their gardens. If this is done, it would be good to get written promises from the recipients to take care of the plants, and agreement that the project would come back and check on the plants in one year.

During a group meeting, serious concerns were expressed about the advisability of promoting the commercialisation of medicinal plants in Libya, because of lack of controls on gathering in the wild, the risks of stimulating overharvesting, and the shortage of water. Other participants were confident commercialisation could work, although laws and enforcement would be needed to guide collection from the wild.

Libya would benefit from having conservation plans for endangered species. At present Libya does not have a national red list, and no-one at EGA is responsible for looking after endangered species. There is an urgent need to develop conservation plans for those medicinal plants that are the most threatened.

Gender in the Libyan context is special. While it is quite possible to work with women from the universities, it is very hard to involve women who are at home. Because of this, EGA gives priority to working with schools and organisations, where women and girls are accessible.

4.5. MOROCCO

Context

According to *The Wellbeing of Nations* report, Morocco scores as an extreme double deficit country, with a poorly performing economy, poor political rights, civil liberties, and press freedom, lack of access for women to education and governance, poor water quality, very little remaining natural landscape, and threats to wild biodiversity.

Morocco, of all the countries in the Mediterranean region, has particularly high species diversity and endemism, with 3800 plant species, of which 829 are endemic.

Recent political developments have put women and gender issues in the forefront of the political scene. There is a quota now for women members of parliament, and a genuine will at all levels to promote activities by women. There is a collaboration underway among UNDP, UNIFEM, and the Moroccan Department of Statistics to produce a gender strategy for Morocco.

In Morocco the project is implemented by the Société Protectrice des Animaux et de la Nature, in close collaboration with the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, the Faculté de Médecine et de Pharmacie de Rabat, and the Direction régionale des Eaux et Forêts du Haut Atlas.

Relevance and Realism

The focus on medicinal plants is quite relevant to the Moroccan context. In rural areas, people rely exclusively upon medicinal plants as healing agents; they do not have the means to buy Western medicines, which are relatively expensive. On the other hand, when working with impoverished local communities in biodiversity-rich areas, there is a need for small development projects, as people's first priority is income generation, and their interest in medicinal plants *per se* is only secondary.

We questioned the links between the activities promoting ecotourism and the overall objectives of medicinal plants conservation. Though the links are tenuous, they may be valid, albeit on a limited scale. According to the project team, pastoralists in the project area who become ecotourism guides will no longer have to rely on grazing their herds in the buffer zone around the park.

There are 130 *douhars* (hamlets) around Toubkal NP, and the people in area do rely on medicinal plants for treating illnesses. Medicinal plants are largely overexploited in and around the park, and there is a need to substitute cultivation for wild harvesting. Local communities have witnessed a vicious cycle whereby as the plants become rarer in the wild; the price increases, and this in turn stimulates more collection.

An examination of the project activity framework with the local and national project team revealed that the project design is feasible and realistic, though the scale at which activities will be conducted will be limited by budget constraints. The rural development activities are very small-scale, and are essentially being carried out as pilot projects.

One change is required in the Activity Framework:

- Activity 4 should read: « Détermination des propriétés biologiques (activités ~~pharmacologiques et toxicologiques~~ anti-microbiennes). »

Results to Date

The project site is Toubkal NP, Morocco's most prestigious protected area in the Atlas Mountains. Though there have been delays for various reasons (delays in signing the contract and in the transfer of funds, lack of live plant samples because of drought, etc.), the project – with the exception of the gender component – is essentially on track:

- The determination of the threatened and endangered medicinal and aromatic plant species in Toubkal NP is ongoing. To date 63 species have been classified according to their degree of rarity, and this will be completed in the second year of Phase III, together with information on their active ingredients, toxicity, method of preparation and medicinal uses.
- Information has been collected and reported on by researchers from the Agronomy and Veterinary Institute Hassan II on traditional knowledge of medicinal and aromatic plants from villagers and herbalists; local uses are reported, together with uses found in the literature.
- Experiments on the extraction and chromatographic analysis of essential oils and active ingredients of medicinal and aromatic plants have been carried out on 23 plants to date (alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, coumarines, essential oils and saponines).
- Experiments to determine the biological properties (pharmacological and toxicological) of medicinal and aromatic plants from the park: 50 samples have been tested for their anti-microbial activity against seven bacterial species; these tests will be completed by tests for their anti-fungal properties, hypoglycaemic activity and toxicity.
- A 6-km environmental educational trail is under construction by local people, and is nearly completed. The trail, overlooking the valleys of Aït Mizane and Immane, is designed to introduce people to the most important trees and plants of the area, and their medicinal properties (Fig. 21).
- Ten thousand carob trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*) have been planted in over 10 ha in the buffer zone of the park; these trees will stabilise slopes and reduce erosion, and will provide local people with a valuable source of revenue (Fig. 22). The IUCN project paid for part of the labour to dig the holes; the Direction des Eaux & Forêts contributed the trees; and the communities contributed part of the labour, and will care for the trees during their first few years of growth. In 15-20 years the villagers will be able to benefit from the carob fruit, which is used to treat diabetes, and can be sold to traders and herbalists for a very good price. The fruit is also used locally to treat diarrhoea.
- 1500 kg of iris (*I. tingitana*) were purchased from the village of Tassa Ourigane, which received irises during Phase II, and these were given to 27 families in the village of Torord. This has been a successful operation: cultivated iris reduce the need to gather iris from the wild, and provide an excellent source of additional revenues, as the iris cultivators can sell the dried rhizomes to herbalists and traders in Marrakesh. Iris is used as an aromatic to perfume closets and linen, and is used to induce vomiting, and as a cure for ulcerations and cancer of the skin; villagers also prefer growing iris to growing wheat because it requires less water.
- Micro-credits to local populations to develop ecotourism facilities.
- Ten 2-ha enclosed parcels have been set up to follow the dynamics of ten different tree and plant species.
- As a result of the project, the awareness of people around the park has increased, and they are protecting thyme plants, and avoiding collecting wild iris.
- Many publications on medicinal plants have already produced in Phase III.
- According to the Editor, very good monographs have been prepared for the Compendium.

The project has a real connection with in situ conservation, as it is looking for ways to counter the main threats to plants in the park: overgrazing, cutting for fuelwood, and overcollection. In the past, non-ligneous plants were not of great importance in the park's conservation strategy, but now they are.

A limited micro-credit programme has been launched to help local people build ecotourism facilities, but, the credit scheme does not charge interest, and has not been set up to be self-sustaining. Unfortunately, there has been no progress whatsoever on specific gender work at the site level.

(NB: Due to the late arrival of luggage at the airport of Marrakesh, the consultant's camera was not available for the field trip. Apologies! These photos were kindly provided by Ramzi Mejdoub.)

Fig. 21. Ecotourism trail to raise awareness about important plants in the area, and their medicinal properties.

Fig. 22. Carob trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*) have been planted on hillsides near villages in the buffer zone of the park to stabilise slopes and reduce erosion, and to provide local people with a valuable source of revenue.

Fig. 23. Gas ovens, provided in Phase II, reduce reliance on fuelwood. Instead of having to gather firewood daily, village women now collect wood only once every two days. Gas, however, is expensive.

Fig. 24. We were warmly welcomed at the village of Torord. Unfortunately it was not possible to speak with any of the women in the village because the project team accompanying the consultant were all men.

Management and Implementation

In Phase II, the project was carried out in each country via two parallel sub-projects: one on biodiversity, and one on women and biodiversity. In Morocco, the biodiversity project was implemented by SPANA, and the women's project by Mlle Hayat Dinia.

In Phase III, with the project centralized in only one implementing organisation in each country, SPANA offered to continue collaborating with Hayat Dinia, and proposed that 10% of the project budget would be devoted to specific gender issues. Mlle Dinia considered this proposal to be inadequate, and declined to cooperate with SPANA.

The project could more effectively address gender by building the capacity of women in the project team, and by ensuring the gender is mainstreamed into the project's ongoing activities. The potential for this is real. We met the Communications Officer of the Direction des Eaux & Forêts for Toubkal NP, a woman who speaks Berber and has long experience in working with women in the villages bordering the park.

The contracts with the National Coordinators specify that they should involve other IUCN Members in the project. This, however, may or may not be feasible, depending on the requirements of the project and the competencies of the Members. In the interest of maximizing project results, SPANA has chosen to work with those organisations that have the best potential to produce the deliverables required by the project, whether they are IUCN Members or not.

According to the National Coordinator, the freeze of the project in December 2002 seriously impeded project activities, and compromised the field team's credibility with local populations.

Capacity of the Implementing Organisation

The Société Protectrice des Animaux et de la Nature in Morocco is considered a model NGO. It is seen as a very professional organisation, is well known, and has good credibility, long experience in project management, and the ability to deliver. SPANA has been positive and constructive in their efforts to keep rest of IUCN membership in Morocco aware of and involved in what they are doing, and they are also quite capable at the regional level.

In addition, the Direction des Eaux & Forêts du Haut Atlas has considerable experience, including using participatory approaches with local communities.

There is clearly a good collaboration among SPANA, the Direction des Eaux & Forêts, and the experts from the Agronomy Institute and the Faculty of Medicine. The project team is competent, experienced and dynamic, but will need to reinforce its capacity to deal with gender issues.

4.6. TUNISIA

Context

Tunisia is rated as a high double-deficit country in the *Wellbeing of Nations* report, with poor performance in the areas of land, water, air, species & genes, and community (political rights, civil liberties and press freedom). There is very little remaining natural landscape; protected areas are few and lacking in diversity, and 47% of the country's land is degraded. Per annum water withdrawal is equivalent to 88% of the internal supply.

The IUCN context in Tunisia is not without conflicts. There is one state IUCN Member (the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources), and four NGO members. According to at least one Member, the IUCN National Committee has not functioned effectively, and information flow between the NGO members and the state member is poor to non-existent.

The NABP in Tunisia is implemented by the Association Tunisienne pour la Protection de la Nature et de l'Environnement (ATPNE), one of the oldest NGOs in the country.

IUCN has excellent relations with its state Member in Tunisia, which has generously provided a lovely and spacious office for IUCN's work in North Africa. The office presently houses the regional coordination of IUCN's Biodiversity Programme in North Africa.

Relevance and Realism

A participatory diagnostic in the new project site (Hamza, in prep.) showed that medicinal and aromatic plants were of little importance to rural women in the project area, and they rarely used traditional medicine. Modern pharmaceuticals are free and widely available, and doctors at the local dispensaries discourage the use of medicinal plants. Thus, medicinal plants may not occupy an important place in the minds of the beneficiaries. There seems to be a much greater interest in and emphasis upon classic development needs (roads, irrigation, etc.).

One informant told us of another project in Tunisia promoting the distillation of aromatic plants that has discovered that the project is not sustainable because commercial outlets are effectively blocked by monopolies. Another informant mentioned that in general the main reason for the failure of commercialisation lies in the poor quality of the products (due to lack of knowledge on aromatic plants and on extraction processes).Thus there are uncertainties whether, at this point, the context is favourable for the commercial aspects of increasing rural revenues by the distillation of medicinal and aromatic plants.

Farmers in the Phase II project area reportedly asked "Why are they asking us to plant thyme and rosemary, when the mountains are full of thyme and rosemary?"

Results to Date

A site visit was made to Bouya Goum (Fig. 25), where the ATPNE is developing a new project together with several other partners. The ATPNE stresses that the first year of Phase III is meant to be devoted to project development. However, the workplan that the ATPNE is following is not in conformance with the activity framework specified in the NABP project document. This has produced considerable confusion, with the project in Tunisia following a workplan that is substantially different from the agreed contractual obligations of IUCN with respect to the funding agency, SDC.

If we examine the results in relation to the ATPNE workplan, the project carried out a participatory diagnostic (example in Fig. 26) from August to October 2002. The report of this diagnostic was to have been produced by 15 October 2002; however, at the time of the review visit in late March 2003, this report still had not been published, although some elements of it were available (Chaaboune, in prep.). The inhabitants of four *douhars* (family hamlets) were consulted, and their priorities were found to be:

a) paving the road from Bouya Goum to Bhyret Azza
b) grants or loans to buy wheat and barley seed
c) irrigation systems and motorised pumps
d) livestock feed for cattle, sheep and goats
e) irrigation cisterns, and

f) drinking water.

Although these families agreed to try growing medicinal plants, their first priorities are the above.

The draft project document produced during Phase III defines the following interventions for IUCN's work in Tunisia together with other partners:

1. Improvement of revenues
   - Promote small-scale irrigation
   - Diversify agriculture with the incorporation of medicinal and aromatic plants
   - Promote raising cattle, bees, poultry and rabbits
   - Promote handicrafts such as weaving
2. Improvement to living conditions
   - Improve roads to the *douhars*
   - Improve housing
   - Improve livestock habitats
   - Reduce illiteracy and provide training in computer technology
   - Ensure the protection of the artificial lake
   - Strengthen community organisations.

We were told that, in addition to the participatory diagnostic, a study is underway of plant populations in the project area. Nevertheless, in this project developed by the ATPNE, it seems that the theme of medicinal plants is only one small part of a much vaster rural development project.

If we now examine the project results in Tunisia in relation to the activity framework of the project document – i.e., the project's contractual obligations – it is clear that to date no progress has yet been made with respect to medicinal, endangered and economically useful plants in Phase III. This finding is obviously of concern, and so the review also endeavoured to understand what had transpired regarding medicinal plants during the previous two phases, though the time available for this was limited.

Phase I of the IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme (1996-1998) produced a compendium of medicinal plants in Tunisia (ATPNE 1997), with a list of all the known medicinal plants, lists according to *Gouvernorats* (regions) of Tunisia, and a description of each plant. A total of 285 sites in ten of Tunisia's 21 *Gouvernorats* were sampled. The survey found 198 species of medicinal plants, and produced a total of 3088 descriptive sheets (including the scientific name, vernacular name, locality, medicinal uses, and harvesting techniques). The most commonly used plants were found to be: rosemary, lavender, absinthe, white artemisia, thyme, fennel, and *Ajuga iva*. Phase I concluded by formulating the following objectives for the project:

- Ensure that the collection of wild plants does not compromise their survival.
- Cultivate medicinal plants in order to ensure supply.
- Promote the establishment of a national body of traditional healers.
- Improve techniques for gathering, stocking, producing and commercialising medicinal plants.
- Communications in order to interest the public in conserving medicinal plants.

Phase II (1999-2001) focused on the area of Rhim, near Ghardimaou, in the northwest of Tunisia in the forested mountains near the Algerian border. This site was chosen for its importance in terms of biodiversity in general, and medicinal plants in particular. The project worked with 48 families living in clearings in the government forests. The families' presence in the forest is tolerated, but not encouraged by the authorities. Activities undertaken by the project were the following:

- Creation of a community association, and building of a community centre (Fig. 27).
- Provision of 5000m of metal fencing to 39 family clearings, essentially to keep wild boar out of the gardens. This fencing reduced wood consumption in the surrounding forest as it replaced traditional closures made from cut trees, shrubs and branches, which have to be replaced periodically.

Fig. 25. The project site for Phase III. Bouya Goum, Tunisia.

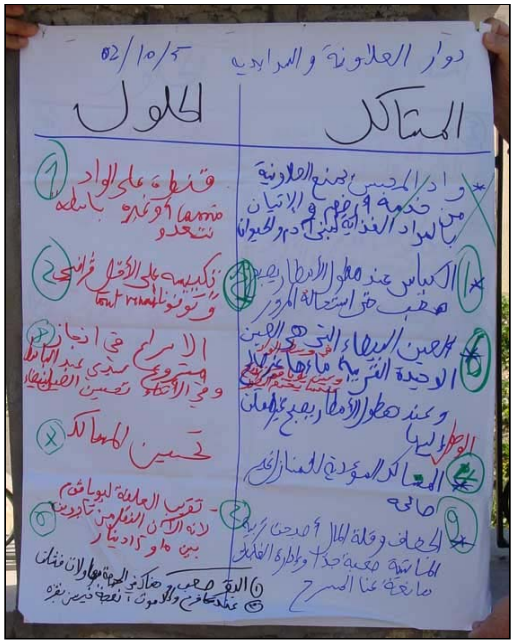

Fig. 26. Participatory diagnosis: problems, solutions, and priorities. Bouya Goum, Tunisia.

Fig. 27. Community Centre built in Phase II. Rhim, Tunisia.

Fig. 28. Phase II beneficiary's garden, with metal fencing, beehives, and fruit trees. No medicinal plants, except for 4 thyme plants, 2 carob trees, and 1 geranium. Rhim, Tunisia.

Provision of 100 wood-saving stoves, which reduce wood consumption by 59%.
- Provision of 4000 young medicinal plants to supply the commercial demand, and hundreds of fruit trees to families for planting in family gardens.
- Purchase of equipment for the community (grinders, distillers).
- Provision of bees, poultry and rabbits in an effort to reduce overgrazing by sheep and goats.

The review visited four family gardens selected by ATPNE at the site of Phase II of the project in order to observe the results of the previous Phase. In these gardens, it was possible to observe the new fencing, the fruit trees and the beehives. However, the culture of medicinal plants was essentially absent. The gardens were mostly planted with fruit trees, onions and beans; one had four thyme plants, four "rosat" geraniums, and a couple of young carob trees (Fig. 28); another had ten geraniums and one thyme plant, but nowhere was there any significant garden area devoted to medicinal plants, though other plants were growing well. From this brief impression, it would appear as though the families we observed made use of the fencing, fruit trees, beehives, etc. provided by the project, but did not continue growing medicinal plants in the following years, with the exception of a few isolated plants for their own use.

Some women did receive training on appropriate techniques for gathering medicinal plants from the wild, but aside from this, the observations made by the review would call into question whether there were lasting results from Phase II in Tunisia in terms the conservation of medicinal plants.

Given that: 1) the strategy for Phase III is similar to that of Phase II, i.e., including medicinal plants as a small part of a much larger rural development project, and 2) the results that we could observe of Phase II were questionable in terms of plant conservation, it is uncertain whether Phase III – as it is presently conceived in Tunisia – is likely to produce good results in terms of medicinal plants and biodiversity conservation.

In addition to the unconvincing results by ATPNE, the medicinal plants expert assigned to contribute to the Compendium has not, according to the Editor, produced adequate monographs. What has been submitted has been incomplete, not according to the agreed format, and not on the agreed species. The expert from Tunisia is new to the Compendium process, and perhaps has not understood the requirements.

Management and Implementation

It is difficult to judge the management of Phase III of the NABP in Tunisia, as the only activity thus far has been a community diagnostic for a rural development project in a new site, but with no implementation yet. It must be said that ANTPE considers that the project suffered greatly from the freeze announced by IUCN in December 2002, which essentially brought the project to a halt.

In Phase II, the IUCN activities were part of a larger project, co-financed by PAOTIC, FCIL, FIAP, and ATPNE. The IUCN contribution of DT 62'900 comprised 28% of the overall project funds.

We interviewed several other partners in Tunisia who expressed concerns about ANTPE's management and accounting procedures. It is not within the scope of this review to verify or refute these concerns. However, ATPNE should be aware that its reputation has been called into question by some partners.

Capacity of the Implementing Organisation

ANTPE is the oldest and largest environmental NGO in Tunisia, and has been influential at both the national and international levels. There are also independent local branches of ATPNE. The

organisation is staffed essentially by volunteers. The IUCN Project Coordinator is a nursery school director; the local coordinator for Phase III in the Bouya Goum area is a French teacher, and the local coordinator for Phase II was a maths teacher.

Opportunities

It would seem that IUCN has considerable opportunities in Tunisia, which it has not yet fully explored, to work with its state Member, the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, and in particular the Department of Nature Conservation. Other potential partners would include botanists and pharmacologists working on medicinal plants, community development specialists, and perhaps the private sector in commercialising medicinal plants and essential oils. With over 140 NGOs working on the environment in Tunisia, and dynamic regional NGOs as well, there should be many opportunities for expanding collaborations in Tunisia.

4.7. REGIONAL COORDINATION

Results to Date

The Regional Coordinator was contracted on September 2001, and has thus been in operation for one and a half years. Results to date include:

- Training workshop organised (October 2002) in participatory approaches and gender.
- Committee of Experts set up.
- Gender Network set up.
- Gender Newsletter drafted, but the Libyan contribution missing.

There have also been a number of shortcomings with regard to the expectations of IUCN and the National Coordinators, for example:

- There has been little effective communications outreach or sharing of knowledge. Among other things, it has been difficult for the Regional Coordination to obtain information from the National Coordinators, and communications with the IUCN Secretariat have been less than optimal.
- No visible progress on the project web site. The web site was to have been discussed in depth at the project meeting that was to have been held last December.
- No exchange visits yet between projects.
- Some of the more experienced participants were frustrated with the introductory training workshop in participatory approaches and gender, and felt their time had not been well spent. The workshop objectives, content and participants were discussed at the project meeting in Tripoli in January 2002, and in the CoE meeting in Tunis in June 2002. In hindsight, the selection of the participants by the National Coordinators might have benefited from a more thorough training needs assessment. In addition, the final training workshop report was very late, although the participants were given the training documents before leaving the workshop.
- There have been delays in producing the monographs for the Compendium. This is the responsibility of the Compendium experts in each country, but it is up to the Compendium Editor and the Regional Coordinator to ensure that the process is kept on track.
- Gender expertise seems to be lacking, and there has been no progress yet on gender analysis of plant use and management for each national project.
- A project "Bulletin" was produced, though this was not in the work plan. The Bulletin was published without the approval of IUCN, nor of the Tunisian Ministry of Information as is required by law. The standard is of the French version is poor, and the English version should probably not be circulated.

- Monitoring of progress in the national (and regional) projects has been inadequate. Correcting this will require a closer collaboration between the National Coordinators, the Regional Coordinator and the IUCN Secretariat.

There are a number of reasons for these problems: at IUCN HQ, the need to strengthen WESCANA's capacity and its ability to provide support to the Regional Coordinator; the need for greater clarity on roles and responsibilities; poor communications; and cancelling the national coordination and Committee of Experts meeting that had been scheduled for December 2002.

Communications

One of the roles of the regional coordination should be to help communications among the five countries of the region. It is unfortunate that partners in the different countries are still generally unaware of what the others are doing. They are keenly interested to read what their colleagues have produced, but are stymied by language barriers and the lack of access to project reports. In each country we visited, the translation and circulation of national reports was cited as a missed opportunity. National Coordinators also said they were not sufficiently aware of the activities of the regional coordination office. Translating and disseminating reports would provide an excellent opportunity for the national programmes to read and comment on one another's reports, to learn from one another, and to improve their own reporting.

Compendium and Best Practice Guide

The Compendium is progressing, but not according to schedule. The goal is to include monographs of 250 medicinal plants from North Africa; to date only 32 satisfactory monographs have been completed.

The Best Practice Guide is intended to take the Compendium from the world of academia to the world of conservation action. It is not clear to the reviewer exactly what will be the contents of the Best Practice Guide, and how they will be developed. The project proposal states:

> *In order to influence the development of relevant policy at the regional and national levels, a "best practice" guide for the conservation of endangered and economically useful plants in North Africa will be produced, based upon experiences from participating countries. This guide will be produced in Arabic, by an author recruited by the North Africa Programme Coordinator for this purpose, under the supervision of the Committee of experts drawn from the Region. This guide will be widely distributed.*

Participatory Approaches

North Africa is at a different starting point than many other regions in regard to participatory approaches and gender initiatives. This approach to conservation and development requires time, patiently gaining acceptance, and then building understanding and capacity. Experience has shown that trying to push too fast can be counter-productive.

At the national level, work is being carried out on a small scale with a few families or hamlets to experiment with growing medicinal plants. Initial efforts have been based on a household approach, which would presumably be scaled up at a later stage to the community level. However, no socio-economic or biodiversity assessments were envisaged, to identify market systems and the impacts of the medicinal plants trade on wild populations and ecosystems.

At the regional level, introductory training workshops were held in participatory approaches and gender for 15 participants. Most of the participants had no experience in participatory and gender approaches, and found the workshops very worthwhile. The trainer proposed to do an ex post assessment three months after the training (i.e., January 2003) to see how participants were using it in the field.

Gender

During Phase II, there were two sub-contracts for each country: one for biodiversity, and one for women and biodiversity. Most of the respondents throughout the region, both men and women, felt that the Phase III strategy of combining the two into one unified project has not worked very well up until now. With the fusion of the two projects in each country, the gender component has generally tended to fall by the wayside.

The project's Gender Network has not yet produced results, and the products from Phase II (the Gender Newsletters) are not terribly convincing. The women interviewed during the review appreciated the efforts of the Regional Coordinator to renew the Gender Network.

Management and Implementation

Progress at the regional level was very much hindered by the fact that the meeting planned for December 2002 was cancelled.

Capacity of the Regional Coordination Team

The regional coordination office is staffed by a Regional Coordinator and an assistant. They are both committed, willing, and eager to make the project work.

4.8. MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FROM IUCN HEADQUARTERS

SDC has contracted IUCN Headquarters (HQ) for this project, which has in turn issued sub-contracts to the Regional Coordinator and to the National Coordinators, who actually coordinate the implementation of the project. The responsibility for providing management and technical support from IUCN HQ rests with the WESCANA Programme. WESCANA is a vast region of arid lands, covering 25 countries from Morocco to Pakistan and north to Kazakhstan. In spite of the huge size of the region, the team coordinating the IUCN WESCANA Programme is very small: a coordinator, a part-time programme officer, an administrative/programme assistant, and a secretary, all of whom have only limited time to devote to the present project.

Given the stretched human resources, the WESCANA team has made great efforts to provide the necessary management support to the project. However, perceptions among the implementing organisations in North Africa are that the support provided has generally not met expectations.

Problems cited include:

- delays in issuing contracts and in transferring funds
- lack of responses to email queries and acknowledgement of reports
- gaps and overlaps in roles and responsibilities, especially with regional coordination office in Tunisia
- lack of clarity in expectations regarding deliverables

- "freezing" the project in December 2002 because of concerns about progress, but then waiting three months before sending the evaluation mission.

There have been perceptions of multiple decision-makers because of uncertainties regarding roles, and this has hindered project functioning.

In addition, technical support from IUCN has been thin. It is unfortunate that the WESCANA Programme has not been able to harness the vast network of technical expertise in the Union in support of this project. The National Coordinators would appreciate feedback and comments on their reports, and helpful advice in general.

It should be noted that communication is a two-way street, and the WESCANA team has also suffered from lack of communications from many of the Coordinators. In addition, reporting from the Coordinators has not always been to IUCN standards.

IUCN has made efforts to support Members in the North Africa region. However, messages have not always been clear, and have sometimes created unrealistic expectations among Members. There is a tremendous opportunity in the region for IUCN to expand its membership, and to build the capacity of Members.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. CONTEXT

This project is being implemented in a particularly challenging context. Social issues in North Africa include poverty, rights and freedoms, governance, crime and civil order, and the participation of women. Among the most pressing environmental issues are:

- unsustainable water use
- land degradation and desertification
- inadequate networks of protected areas, and
- the erosion of biodiversity.

There is an urgent need to monitor biodiversity at the national and local levels, and to develop action plans for conservation and sustainable use. At present there is no internationally recognised baseline for easily assessing which plants listed as endemic on national red lists are in fact truly globally threatened.

The region is clearly a difficult one to work in. Language and cultural issues are important, and should not be underestimated.

5.2. RELEVANCE AND REALISM

The project is very relevant to the needs of IUCN Members in the region, and provides an opportunity to learn about the relationships between conservation and development. It also provides an opportunity for Members to develop a collective voice with respect to biodiversity and the implementation of the CBD.

The theme of medicinal plants is well chosen, as it provides a good entry point for biodiversity conservation in general. Medicinal plants are important for the people of North Africa, especially in rural areas. In many places, plants are the only source of medicine available. Even in many urban

areas, the prices of modern medicines are increasing, and people are turning back to traditional plant remedies. According to our sources, the trade in medicinal plants is substantial and growing, and there should be real possibilities to achieve income gains that are significant locally, from the cultivation of medicinal plants.

5.3. RESULTS TO DATE

In Morocco and Libya, the project activities are closely linked with conserving medicinal plants in situ.

In Algeria, Libya and Egypt, the project has made important advances in scientific and agronomic experiments to reproduce and cultivate wild medicinal plants. This is an essential pre-requisite for moving from wild harvests to the cultivation of medicinal plants by rural communities.

However, the project approach to development seems to be lacking in sophistication – while tangible support is important, it is not the distribution of equipment alone (e.g., improved stoves) that will generate long-term sustainable development.

A brief summary of the results are as follows:

- The project in Algeria has many achievements to its credit: pilot projects have been set up on three women-run farms to cultivate relatively large quantities of medicinal plants; active work at the Batna field station on the experimental nursery, seed bank, specimen collection and production of environmental education materials; experiments on reproducing medicinal plants are also being carried out at the botanical garden in Algiers; according to the Compendium Editor, very good monographs have been contributed to the Compendium.
- In Egypt, the project is essentially based on ex situ conservation of medicinal plants. A Centre for Conservation of Endangered Plants has been built, and a garden is underway to grow threatened and endangered plants. Four Bedouin micro-nurseries produce hard-to-find plants for the garden, and the traditional knowledge of the Bedouin is being gathered and documented. The project is also supporting phytochemical research, investigations on the status of medicinal plants in the project area near El Hammam, and in the view of the Editor good contributions have been made to the Compendium.
- Progress has been solid, but slow in Libya. Researchers and students are gathering traditional knowledge, especially from women. Seed collection and reproduction trials of endangered plants are ongoing at two experimental stations near Abu-Ghailan NP. Other work includes: gathering field data on endangered plants, herbarium specimens, experiments in seed germination of medicinal and other rare and endangered plants of the area, and environmental education. Monographs for the Compendium are behind schedule, and no contribution has been made yet to the Gender Newsletter. IUCN provided training in January 2002 to EGA staff to develop a regional medicinal plants database, but there has not been much follow-up so far.
- Excellent progress is being made in Morocco in a project that is closely linked to plant conservation in one of Morocco's most prestigious protected areas, Toubkal NP: determination of threatened and endangered medicinal and aromatic plant species in the park; collection and documentation of traditional knowledge; analysis of the active ingredients in medicinal plants; experiments to determine anti-microbial activities of medicinal plants from the park; promotion of ecotourism; afforestation in the buffer zone with 10'000 carob trees; community cultivation of iris as a source of additional revenue; awareness-raising; many publications produced, and very good monographs contributed to the Compendium.
- The project in Tunisia is operating according to a different workplan than the one in the agreed project document. In relation to the activity framework of the project document – i.e., the project's contractual obligations – to date no progress has yet been made in Tunisia with respect to medicinal plants in Phase III. The observations made by the review from a brief

visit to the project site of Phase II call into question whether there were lasting results from Phase II in Tunisia in terms the conservation of medicinal plants. According to the Compendium Editor, contributions to the Compendium from the expert in Tunisia have not been adequate.

- At the level of the regional coordination, results include: training workshop organised in participatory approaches and gender; Committee of Experts and Gender Network set up; Gender Newsletter drafted. There have also been disappointments with regard to the regional coordination, for example: the lack of progress in disseminating and sharing knowledge; no visible progress on the project web site; delays in producing monographs for the Compendium, and inadequate monitoring of progress in the national and regional projects. There are multiple reasons for this, and a number of operational recommendations to improve the regional coordination are given in Annex I on page 60.
- Largely because of the constraints of the very limited human resources in the regional programme at IUCN HQ, management and technical support has not met expectations.

5.4. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

North Africa is a region that would benefit from more intensive leadership from IUCN.

In countries where IUCN has several NGO Members, we sometimes heard resentment from those Members who were not involved in implementing the project. When IUCN is implementing a project, it seeks to select partners to work with first and foremost on the basis of their expertise and ability to credibly deliver results.

All of the women's groups that we met, who had previously had a key role in Phase II, said they were disappointed by the decision for Phase III to combine the work with women and the work on biodiversity into a single project in each country. They all expressed a feeling of being marginalised in Phase III by a project that is essentially dominated by men. It is the opinion of the review that the decision to combine the gender and the biodiversity projects in Phase III was fundamentally sound. However, the implications of this are that the project as a whole, and the National Coordinators in particular, should look for ways to better integrate women and gender issues in the present phase.

In most countries, the project teams have a strong percentage of women. In addition, the field of biology is becoming more and more dominated by women. Though the National Coordinators are all men, there are women working as key collaborators in all of the project teams. In addition, the fact that the regional coordination and all of the IUCN Members working in the national projects have agreed to emphasise the importance of participatory approaches and involving women in Phase III can, in itself, be seen as a step forward.

There are specific challenges to management and implementation in each of the countries:

- In Algeria, serious bureaucratic hurdles at the ANN have compromised project effectiveness.
- In Egypt, implementation may benefit from a more multi-disciplinary team, including professionals in protected areas and land use management, and specialists in development and gender.
- To improve implementation in Libya, it would be helpful to emphasise communicating more and delivering results on schedule.
- In Morocco, there has been a blockage with the gender component, but this should be able to be resolved by mainstreaming gender into the core project activities.
- In Tunisia, IUCN may wish to consider working with a different implementing organisation.
- The regional coordination would benefit from more active technical and management support from IUCN.

5.5. CAPACITY OF THE IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONS

Based on the interviews carried out in the context of this review, the organisations with whom IUCN is working in Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Morocco are perceived as good and credible partners in terms of conservation.

On the other hand, these Members generally have little experience in linking conservation with development, and with development issues and best practices in general. For this reason, building capacity in development thinking is one of the main aims of this project.

5.6. OPPORTUNITIES

While the project can be implemented as designed, there may be value in rethinking the design. To this end, one could base the review of the redesign on a few key avenues, e.g.,:

- Investing greater efforts in those activities and areas which are promising, for example Algeria for medicinal plant farming and gender integration, and Morocco and Libya for the integration of in-situ and ex-situ conservation.

- Documenting and distilling learning from the best practice in these areas, and using this for wider capacity building in the region, with links as well to contemporary IUCN initiatives in South East Asia, Sri Lanka and East Africa.

- Expanding the network of partners in all countries of the region to include those directly involved in the project implementation plus others who have an interest in and would benefit from learning about the project. Those network participants who are not IUCN members may be encouraged to become members, since in the longer term, this would be a key to promoting the sustainability of the project results in the region.

- Using resources that may be freed up from focusing the project on select activities, for strengthening the regional and global dimensions of the project, for example,
    - the economic feasibility of cultivating medicinal plants,
    - the impact of farm cultivation and commercialisation on in situ conservation,
    - the sustainability of trade in medicinal plants
    - policy implications of legal and illegal trade in medicinal plants across the countries, and
    - documenting contributions of the project to the implementation of the CBD, etc.

Other opportunities for re-focusing might include:

- Enhancing strategic direction from IUCN. It would be good to set targets for the project's ultimate impact on plant conservation in situ. The IUCN Mediterranean Programme could be an important resource in this regard.

- The project activity framework could be updated with clear targets, deliverables, indicators, and audiences. The project is on the right track in supporting improved networking, collaborative workshops, and capacity building, and this should be continued and strengthened.

- Work on traditional knowledge could be linked with preservation of IPRs in each country.

- In light of the under-representation of protected areas in North Africa, the project could seek to emphasise greater links with existing protected areas or creating new protected areas that

would help to conserve medicinal plants. This would be especially relevant in Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia.

- It would be good to bring in genuine expertise in gender issues, and begin exploring empowering women and girls as natural resource managers in local communities. The project could enhance its focus on using the concept of medicinal plants to make biodiversity conservation more useful to women, and to answer questions like:
  - What role have women played in managing medicinal plants in the wild?
  - How can the conservation of biodiversity increase women's social status, influence, and income?

- The major expected products of the regional work – the Compendium and the Best Practice Guide – could provide a basis for taking the level of discussion among Members to another level. If these documents are of the quality that is hoped, they should be a platform for work with the CBD, SBSTTA, and other biodiversity conventions.

- The region would profit from technical support in implementing the CBD, and in productively linking work with the various biodiversity conventions.

- The project could benefit from working in a more proactive way with other key initiatives and institutions having medicinal/aromatic plants components, such as the CBD Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, Plantlife International, Planta Europa, and the IUCN Medicinal Plant Specialist Group.

- A regional conservation assessment of medicinal plants endemic to the region would be very useful.

- The most important new direction in which the project could move may be to make stronger links between the work that is presently being carried out, and the conservation of medicinal plants in situ.

Synergies with the Mediterranean Programme

There are excellent opportunities for developing synergies between the NABP and the IUCN Mediterranean Programme. IUCN Members in North Africa generally feel closer to the Mediterranean region than they do to West and Central Asia.

The NABP is well placed to contribute to all three of the programme objectives of the long-term strategy of the IUCN Mediterranean Programme:

- Make knowledge, information and experience on conservation and management of biodiversity … available for conservation, sustainable use and rehabilitation efforts.
- Strengthen and support IUCN Members and Commissions in the region …
- Promote … Mediterranean policies on conservation and sustainable development …

In particular, it would be beneficial to make links to the new project on Important Plant Areas (IPA) in the Mediterranean, which provides a framework, in the context of the CBD, for identifying those areas important for plant conservation.

The IUCN Malaga office could also be accessed for providing technical support necessary for the project.

6. PRIORITY AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme should be continued, and extended for one more year to allow for the delays that have been encountered so far. The project has very good prospects of producing results which the implementing organisations, IUCN, and SDC can all be proud of (the Compendium, the Best Practices Guide, the web site, the lessons learned from the site projects, etc.). IUCN HQ and the Regional Coordination will need to invest substantial efforts to accompany the process, and take a more active role to ensure that these results are achieved.

2. It would be good to reschedule the regional meeting that had been planned for December 2002 for as soon as possible, so that the project can regain its momentum.

3. Since in Tunisia, there is a question whether the project, as presently implemented, will deliver satisfactory results, IUCN may wish to explore alternative implementation arrangements for the remainder of Phase III. One possibility may be to develop a revised implementation plan with IUCN's state member, the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources. In planning the work in Tunisia for the remainder of the project, realism will be especially important, given the limited time frame and budget.

4. In order to avoid the administrative delays that are presently compromising the work in Algeria, the project management needs immediate change. The best solution would be for IUCN to address the project contract for the second year of Phase III to the present National Coordinator, Mr Tewfik Meftah under the auspices of the Mouvement Ecologique Algérien.

5. In Morocco it would be good for SPANA to take responsibility for the entire budget, including gender; capacity exists in the project site to work effectively with women; however, this capacity needs to be strengthened to address gender issues in their wider, more strategic sense. Gender should be mainstreamed into the project activities, as has been done in Algeria.

6. IUCN should look for ways to follow up on the many opportunities that exist in North Africa to expand its membership, and to build the capacity of Members.

6.2. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The strategic aims of the project could be better defined, for example, by setting targets for the project's ultimate impact on plant conservation in situ. It would be good to clarify the scale and relevance of the project, e.g., how many species are involved, and how many of those are endangered?

8. Possibilities for new activities in the remainder of Phase III might include:
    - consultant time to develop a full proposal for a more ambitious programme to conserve medicinal plants in North Africa
    - designing an economic study on the importance of medicinal plants to:
        - quantify trade flows for key species
        - determine the effects of trade on plants in the wild
        - determine the feasibility of commercial cultivation of medicinal plants in the project areas, without stimulating overcollection in the wild
    - an examination of the legal and policy basis for community-based natural resource management in the five countries

- an assessment of what would be necessary to scale up activities at the level of the family farm to CBNRM, including policy changes regarding land tenure.

9. A proposal for a new, more substantial, biodiversity conservation programme in North Africa could be developed. It might begin with a regional conservation assessment of plants endemic to the region, and their medicinal (and other) uses, and continue the focus on participatory and gender approaches and scale this up to the community level. It could also include:
    - development of a comprehensive biodiversity strategy for North Africa
    - regional SSC meetings
    - implementation of the economic / biodiversity study on the importance of medicinal plants, already designed in the remainder of Phase III
    - policy and advocacy work to establish the legal basis for CBNRM in the five countries
    - policy and advocacy work on legislation to protect IPRs in North Africa
    - genuine gender experts working with the project in each country
    - working with communities to develop land use practices that combat desertification
    - building IUCN's institutional presence in the region.

10. Participatory strategies will be most effective when they can be based on sound assessments of the factors affecting sustainable use. Resources permitting, the project could make use of IUCN's considerable experience in assessment methodologies, and carry out assessments of the social, economic and ecological factors driving and limiting the medicinal plants trade in and around the project sites, using gender dis-aggregated data. This would be a valuable complement to the project's ongoing work to assess the status and trends of medicinal plant species.

11. The integration of gender work in Phase III has not been optimal. Most of the National Coordinators need to redouble their efforts to mainstream gender into the project's work on biodiversity conservation at the national level, and the Regional Coordinator and IUCN could help support this. There is a danger of the project's Gender Network not being relevant (or worse, causing interference), if it is composed of women not working directly with the project. It would be good if the Network were to include those women in the project actively working at the community level at the project sites, plus an international and a regional gender expert.

12. It would be good for the Regional Coordination to give priority to contributing to, and consolidating news on, relevant biodiversity policy processes at the national, regional, global levels.

13. It may be beneficial for the project to make links to the new initiative coordinated by the IUCN Malaga office on Important Plant Areas in the Mediterranean.

Algeria

14. In Algeria, monitoring (and perhaps strict controls) will be needed to ensure that stimulating the trade in medicinal plants does not increase overcollection in the wild.

Egypt

15. It would be good if the project in Egypt could:
    - make more active links to in situ conservation, and develop closer collaborations with agencies responsible for protected areas and natural resource management
    - look into the possibilities for promoting the sustainable harvest of wild medicinal plants via community-based natural resource management
    - carry out studies to understand and quantify the trade in medicinal plants, and develop strategies for ensuring that the trade is sustainable
    - explore possibilities for the restoration of natural medicinal plant habitats.

16. In Egypt it will be also important to seek out genuine expertise in gender issues, and begin exploring how to empower women and girls as natural resource managers in Bedouin communities.

Libya

17. Greater support is needed in Libya to encourage participatory and gender approaches. Work on gender should be supported by a competent gender expert, and should proceed at a pace appropriate for the Libyan context.

18. It would be good if the Regional Coordination could help motivate the Libyan team to participate more actively in the project (e.g., Gender Newsletter, Compendium, database).

Morocco

19. In Morocco it should not be assumed that alternative income generation (from ecotourism for example) will automatically reduce pressures on natural resource use. Baseline data should be gathered before and after the introduction of alternative incomes, to assess the effectiveness of these strategies in the local context.

Tunisia

20. In an updated implementation plan for Tunisia, a special effort should be made to ensure that gender concerns and participatory approaches are integrated into the project, and that women are fully involved, both as project partners and as project beneficiaries.

Further to the strategic recommendations, a number of operational recommendations are given in Annex I on page 60.

6.3. FACTORS SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE DELIVERY

Based on the outcome of this review, it was possible to identify some of the factors supporting effective conservation delivery, namely:

- A competent, motivated team, which is able to work together in close collaboration.
- A multi-disciplinary team, combining skills in: project management, botany, pharmacology, ethnobotany, agronomy, protected area restoration and management, community conservation, participatory approaches, and gender (skills in conservation science would be a good addition).
- National Coordinators who understand the challenges of delivering on biodiversity conservation, who are excellent managers, and who delegate with confidence to their teams.
- Seamless integration of women into the project strategy in terms of project staffing and the identification of beneficiaries.
- A strategic approach to the identification of the project area, so that the project can work effectively with women.
- Genuine presence at the field level.
- Good contacts with people in the field and with local authorities.

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The IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme is essentially a good project, which has achieved considerable results (though reporting has been poor), in spite of implementation problems that have arisen.

We are confident that, with the necessary corrective steps, the project has every opportunity to achieve its worthwhile potential in the remainder of Phase III.

- **Annex A.**

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW

The Director, Global Programme and the WESCANA Programme require the assistance of an evaluation consultant to review the progress of the North Africa Biodiversity Programme, Phase III in order to advise on improvements to the current project focus, management and operations, and to identify opportunities for future programming, networking and capacity building in North Africa.

Specifically, the consultant is required to undertake the following tasks:

1. Assess the extent to which 1) the original design of the project is appropriate and still relevant to the needs of the region; and 2) the agreed set of deliverables are realistic, within the right time scale, with being delivered with the right partners.

2. Review and articulate the original expectations and current perceptions of IUCN, partners and SDC in this project and comment on whether these expectations and perceptions are realistic and appropriate in light of current performance.

3. Assess the feasibility of either continuing the project under improved implementation arrangements and capacity, or redesigning the project afresh for a modified period in the remaining budget. In that regard:

    - Assess the capacity of current project partners / implementers to sustain the efforts of the project beyond the life of the project and take on new dimensions of the work.

    - Assess the opportunities for future implementation work, including expansion or refocusing of the existing project work, taking on new areas of work that address relevant issues and needs in the region, and supporting networking and capacity building activities in support of WESCANA's programme objectives.

    - Assess possible synergies between the Mediterranean Programme and the WESCANA North Africa Biodiversity Project.

4. Review the current management and implementation arrangements of the project including from IUCN HQ to the operational level in the field, in order to assess how these respective arrangements have helped or hindered project implementation. Advise if and how these implementation arrangements might be changed or reformed.

5. Where results have been delivered satisfactorily to date (according to workplan) identify the factors that have supported the effective delivery of these outputs, and how or whether these factors can/should be replicated in other project sites.

6. Make overall recommendations to the Director Global Programme and the WESCANA Programme Coordinator on how the project contents and structure may be reorganised to ensure an effective use of available resources

7. Provide observations on any other aspect of IUCN performance and opportunities that would be helpful in addressing this assignment. that may come to the attention of the consultant during the course of the review.

This assignment will require travel to all 5 project sites in North Africa, as well as interviews (phone or in person) with SDC Berne senior staff, key project partners, members and Councillors in the region, as well as IUCN programme staff at HQ and in the Mediterranean Programme Office.

The consultant will report to the Director Global Programme and work closely with the Regional Office for WESCANA.

Annex B.

EVALUATION MATRIX

Issues	Key Questions	Sub-questions	Data Sources
Project design and expectations	Are there design problems?	• What are the broad expectations of each programme? • What deliverables are expected, and by when? • What indicators were developed to measur achievement of project goals and objective • How relevant is the project to IUCN and stakeholder priorities?	- Project documents - In depth discussion with P. Hislaire - Interviews with stakeholders (HQ, national partners)
Project performance	How effective has the project been to date?	• How has the project performed in relation to its 8 agreed guidelines? • What are the strengths and weaknesses of technical capacity / expertise in each programme? • What are the strengths and weaknesses of technical support from IUCN HQ? • How effective has the project been in promoting a strong conservation interest in the region? • How effectively has gender been integrated in to the project activities? • What results has the project produced on the ground?	- Internal evaluation of May 2000 - Project reports - Interviews with stakeholders (HQ, national partners) - Field visits in Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco
Delivery of outputs	Is the project delivering according to schedule? If not, why not?	• What outputs and services have been delivered? • Have there been delays in delivery? If so, why?	- Project documents - Interviews with stakeholders (HQ, national partners) - Field visits
Project management and coordination	What are the strengths and weaknesses of project management and coordination?	• What are the strengths and weaknesses of management capacity in each of the 5 offices? • What are the strengths and weaknesses of management capacity in the regional programme? • What are the strengths and weaknesses of management support from IUCN HQ? • Are reporting lines clear and effective? • Could technical reporting be improved? • Could financial reporting be improved? • Are there problems of transparency?	- Project contracts - Self-assessments - Interviews with stakeholders (HQ, national partners) - Visits to national and regional offices - Project technical and financial reports
Teamwork and collaboration	How effective are internal and external communications and collaboration?	• How well does the project collaborate as a team: regionally, internationally, and with IUCN HQ? • How does each component of the project relate to other IUCN members and other partners in their country or region? What has worked and what has not with members at the national level?	- Self-assessments - Interviews with stakeholders in Gland, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, etc.

		• What is the relationship with SDC and InterCooperation in each country? • How well does the regional project team communicate with the major regional organisations in Tunisia? • Do stakeholders care about the project and believe it makes sense? • What is the reputation and credibility of the project and of IUCN with stakeholders?	
Recommen-dations	How to move forward in the remainder of Phase III?	• Could the project design be refined, streamlined, or strengthened? • How could IUCN strengthen the management of the project? • What should IUCN do regarding late deliveries? • How could regional coordination be improved? • How could national coordinators improve relationships with partners in-country? …with SDC in country? • How could IUCN improve support to the project from HQ? • Are changes needed to fulfil the project objectives and contractual obligations?	- Self-assessments - Synthesis and analysis of the above issues and questions - 2nd briefing with P. Hislaire - Debriefing with IUCN.

Annex C.

INTERVIEW GUIDE / QUESTIONNAIRE

Project Team Self-Assessment and Questionnaire

Certain aspects of the IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme (NABP) are experiencing severe implementation problems. IUCN management, and the project donor, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), are aware that overall, the project is substantially under-spent; many expected results are not being delivered, and reporting is inadequate.

The purpose of this review is to advise IUCN on improvements to the current project focus, management and operations, and to identify opportunities for future programming, networking and capacity building in North Africa. The spirit of the review is to be forward-looking. We are especially interested in identifying components of this project that have performed well and that can serve as examples to the others.

The review will be based on field visits, an analysis of the programme documentation, and interviews with key partners and stakeholders. The review is being carried out by an external consultant:

Meg Gawler (meg@artemis-services.com; tel: +33 4 5040 7870).

The consultant will be accompanied during the mission by the IUCN Regional Coordinator for the North Africa Programme:

Ramzi Mejdoub (mejdoub.ramzi@topnet.tn; tel: +216 71 80 93 10 ; mobile: +216 98 64 64 94).

The review team will be interviewing stakeholders from:

1. Project implementing organisations
2. IUCN (West/Central Asia and North Africa (WESCANA) programme staff and others)
3. Partners (national and regional) and IUCN Members
4. SDC and InterCooperation
5. Project beneficiaries.

The evaluation report will be the entire responsibility of the consultant.

This review is meant to encourage transparency, and we would like to offer you the opportunity to carry out a self-assessment in advance of our interviews. If possible, we would encourage you to provide written answers to the following review questions.

Please rest assured that all replies will be strictly confidential. Information will be aggregated by stakeholder group, synthesized, and presented in a confidential report to IUCN management.

Please add any information you feel would be useful for the review. Likewise, some questions may not be relevant to your organisation; in that case, please just answer "not applicable". Or if you feel you do not know the answer to a question, feel free to answer "Don't know".

Your views are extremely valuable for this exercise. We realize that your time is precious, and we thank you very much for you input to the review.

IDENTIFICATION	
Your Name	
Position	
Organisation	
Telephone	
Email	
Date	

Introduction

0. Please describe your involvement with IUCN's North Africa Biodiversity Project and your knowledge of it.

Project Design and Expectations

1. How realistic do you consider the agreed set of deliverables and the overall project design to be?

2. How relevant is the North Africa Biodiversity Programme to IUCN, stakeholder priorities, and the needs of the region?

Project Effectiveness

3. How has the project performed in relation to its contractual obligations?

4. What outputs and services have been delivered?

5. Briefly, what results has the project produced on the ground?

6. How effectively has gender been integrated in to the project activities?

7. How effective has the project been in promoting a strong conservation interest in the country and/or the region?

Project Implementation

8. Have there been delays in delivery of project results? If so, why?

9. How well does the project collaborate as a team regionally, and with IUCN globally?

10. What are the strengths and weaknesses of technical and management support from IUCN HQ?

11. Are reporting lines clear and effective?

12. How could technical reporting be improved?

13. How could financial reporting be improved?

14. How does your organisation relate to other IUCN Members and other partners in your country? What has worked and what has not with Members at the national level?

15. How does your component of the project relate to other IUCN Members and other partners at the regional level?

16. In your opinion, how well does the regional project team communicate with the major regional organisations in Tunisia?

17. Please describe your relationship with SDC and InterCooperation in your country.

Capacity

18. What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of technical expertise in your organisation?

19. What are the strengths and weaknesses of management capacity in your organisation? How does your management style facilitate the achievement of results?

20. How well do staff profiles fit the project's needs?

21. In your opinion, how well does your organisation's work represent cutting-edge thinking in conservation and development? Please explain.

22. Does your organisation have a strategic plan to guide its work? If so, is there a process in place for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan? Does your organisation have an explicit business plan?

23. What types of monitoring and evaluation processes does your organisation have in place, and how do they feed into reporting and decision making?

24. What governance bodies are in place to guide your organisation, and how do they function?

25. In your opinion, what is the overall conservation impact of your organisation in your country?

26. Who are the competitors of your organisation? Why are they competitors and not partners?

27. Is there a gender balance mechanism in place within your organisation? How effective has it been?

28. How is your organisation affected by the political, socio-economic, administrative and legal environment of the country?

29. In your opinion, what is the capacity of your organisation to sustain the efforts of the project beyond the life of the project, and take on new dimensions of work?

Opportunities

30. What new areas of work would address relevant conservation issues and needs in the region?

31. What new areas of work would enhance networking and capacity building in support of IUCN WESCANA's programme objectives?

32. What possible synergies do you see with IUCN's Mediterranean Programme?

Recommendations

33. In your opinion, how could the project design be refined, streamlined, or strengthened?

34. How could IUCN improve technical and management support to the project from HQ?

35. How could IUCN strengthen the management and delivery of the IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme?

36. How could regional coordination of the project be improved?

37. What could your organisation do to enhance relationships with partners in your country? …with SDC in your country?

38. What changes do you think are needed to ensure an effective use of the remaining resources available in the IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme?

39. Are there any additional programmatic or organisational lessons that you would like to highlight from Phase III of the IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme?

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PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING BROAD QUESTIONS BY TICKING THE APPROPRIATE BOX

VEUILLEZ RÉSUMER VOS POINTS DE VUE SUR LES QUESTIONS CI-APRÈS EN COCHANT LA CASE PROPRIÉE

تفضلوا بوضع خلاصة لآرائكم حول الأسئلة المطروحة لاحقا وذلك بوضع علامة في الجدول المناسب

How appropriate (i.e., relevant and realistic) are the original project design and the expectations of IUCN, partners, and SDC?
Dans quelle mesure la conception du projet est-elle appropriée (c'est-à-dire, pertinente et réaliste) ?
أ). ما هي مناسبة تصميم المشروع والتوقعات حسب رأيكم (أي من ناحية الجدوى والواقعية) ؟

Don't know		Inappropriate	Slightly appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Quite appropriate	Highly appropriate
Ne sais pas		Inappropriée	Modérément appropriée	Plutôt appropriée	Tout à fait appropriée	Extrêmement appropriée
لا أعرف		غير مناسب	غير مناسب	مناسب إلى حد ما	مناسب	مناسب جدا

How effective has the project been to date?
Dans quelle mesure le projet s'est-il révélé été efficace jusqu'à présent ?
ب). إلى أي مدى كان المشروع مجديا إلى حد الآن ؟

Don't know		Ineffective	Slightly effective	Somewhat effective	Quite effective	Highly effective
Ne sais pas		Inefficace	Modérément efficace	Plutôt efficace	Tout à fait efficace	Extrêmement efficace
لا أعرف		غير مجدي	مجدي بعض الشيء	مجدي إلى حد ما	مجدي	مجدي جدا

Have the current management and implementation arrangements helped or hindered project delivery?
Les dispositions de l'organisme d'exécution relatives à la gestion et à la mise en œuvre ont-elles facilité ou entravé la mise en œuvre du projet ?
ت). هل أن إجراءات التصرف والتنفيذ المعمول بها من قبل المنظمة المنفذة سهلت أم عرقلت إنجاز المشروع ؟

Don't know		Strongly hindered	Somewhat hindered	Neutral	Quite helpful	Highly helpful
Ne sais pas		Fortement entravé	Plutôt entravé	Neutre	Tout à fait utile	Extrêmement utile
لا أعرف		عرقلت كثيرا	عرقلت بعض الشيء	لم تؤثر سلبا أو إيجابا	ساعدت	ساعدت كثيرا

How would you rate the capacity of your organisation to sustain the efforts of the project and take on new dimensions of work?
Comment évalueriez-vous la capacité de l'organisme d'exécution de votre pays de faire perdurer les efforts du projet et d'accepter de nouvelles dimensions de travail ?
ث). كيف تقيمون قدرة المنظمة المنفذة في بلدكم على ضمان ديمومة أنشطة المشروع وقبولها لإدراجها ضمن أفاق عمل جديدة ؟

Don't know		No capacity	Low capacity	Some capacity	Good capacity	High capacity
Ne sais pas		Aucune capacité	Faible capacité	Une certaine capacité	Bonne capacité	Capacité élevée
لا أعرف		لا قدرة لديها	قدرة متواضعة	قدرة متوسطة	قدرة وكفاءة جيدة	كفاءة وقدرات عالية

Annex D.

MISSION ITINERARY / TIMETABLE

Day	Date	Country	Activities
Wed	12.03		Travel Geneva to Tripoli via Tunis
Thu	13.03	Libya	Interviews with project team at EGA
Fri	14.03	Libya	Field visit to Abu-Ghailan and Tubbi
Sat	15.03	Libya	Interviews with EGA staff
Sun	16.03	Libya	Interviews with Swiss Embassy, UNDP, project staff
Mon	17.03		Travel Tripoli to Marrakesh via Casablanca
Tue	18.03	Morocco	Field visit to project site: Toubkal NP and village of Torord; interview with local project team (Eaux & Forêts)
Wed	19.03	Morocco	Travel to Rabat and interviews with Swiss Embassy, project team, Coordinator of IUCN National Committee
Thu	20.03	Morocco	Interviews with partners and project team
Fri	21.03		Travel Rabat to Algiers via Casablanca and Marseille
Sat	22.03	Algeria	Travel Algiers to Batna; field visit to Batna and Timgad; interviews with beneficiaries and project team
Sun	23.03	Algeria	Travel Batna to Algiers; interviews with partners
Mon	24.03	Algeria	Interviews ANN, Swiss Embassy
Tue	25.03		Interviews SAIDAL; travel Algiers to Tunis
Wed	26.03	Tunisia	Interviews ATPNE; travel Tunis to Tagerouine; site visit
Thu	27.03	Tunisia	Travel Tagerouine to Gardimaou; site visit; travel to Tunis
Fri	28.03	Tunisia	Interviews with partners
Sat	29.03	Tunisia	Meeting of IUCN National Committee and interviews
Sun	30.03	Tunisia	Interviews regional coordination; data analysis
Mon	31.03		Travel from Tunis to Cairo
Tue	01.04	Egypt	Interviews with project team and partners
Wed	02.04	Egypt	Travel from Cairo to El Hammam; site visits and interviews
Thu	03.04	Egypt	Site visits and interviews; travel from El Hammam to Cairo
Fri	04.04		Travel from Cairo to Geneva via London

Annex E.

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED

Group	Last Name	First Name	Organisation	Position
IUCN				
Project				
	Parakatil	Francis	IUCN HQ	Former Director, WESCANA
	Khanfour	Dona	IUCN HQ	Admin & Prog Asst, WESCANA
	Hislaire	Peter	Independent	Consultant on retainer to WESCANA
Other IUCN				
	Jackson	Bill	IUCN HQ	Director, Global Programmes and Interim Director, WESCANA Prog.
	Rafiq	Mohammed	IUCN HQ	Senior Advisor, Special Assignments
	MacPherson	Nancy	IUCN HQ	Head, M&E Initiative
	McNeely	Jeffrey	IUCN HQ	Chief Scientist
	Gratzfeld	Joachim	IUCN HQ	Programme Officer, WESCANA
	Skinner	Jamie	Centre for Medit. Coop.	Director
	Strahm	Wendy	IUCN HQ	Plants Officer, Species Programme
SDC				
	Droz	François		
	Schellenberg	Hans		Dep. Director, Medit. Region
Libya				
Project				
	Abdulrahman	Farag	Univ. Al Fateh	Professor, Dept. of Botany
	Erteeb	Fathi	Univ. Al Fateh	Professor, Dept. of Botany
	Al-Kikli	Ali	EGA	Administrative Coordinator
	Al Humrani	Asma	EGA	Researcher
	Ghaith	Faraj	Min. Agric.	Local Coordinator
	Bel-Kheir	Sulaiman	Min. Agric.	Asst. Expert
	Ellssawi	Mustafa	Min. Agric.	Asst. Expert
Partners				
	Hussain	Noruldine	EGA	Head Mgr for Env, Garian Area
	Abdulkarim	Mohammed	Min. Agric.	Responsible for Western Mtn Area
	Etayeb	Khaled	EGA	Unit of Protected Areas
	El-Khweldi	Abubaker	UNDP	Programme Officer
Swiss				
	Markus	Peter	Swiss Embassy	Ambassador
	AL moghani	Hassan	Swiss Embassy	Translator and Trade Assistant
Morocco				
Project	Belemlih	Abdelhamid	SPANA	National Coordinator (project)
	Benhiba	Mohamed	Eaux & Forêts	Directeur Régional
	Didouqen	Larbi	PN Toubkal	Directeur du Parc
	Agzit	Jamila	PN Toubkal	Chargée de la Commuincation
	Lemnaouer	Driss	Inst. Hassan II	Professeur (medicinal plants expert)
	Fraigui	Ouidad	Inst. Hassan II	Researcher (medicinal plants expert)
	Dinia	Hayat	Présidente	Le Féminin Pluriel
Partners				

	Haddane	Brahim	Parc Zoologique	Sec. Gen. du Comité National de l'UICN
	Alaoui	Idris	Min des Affaire Etrangères	Responsible du Comité National de l'UICN
	El-Mkhantar	Hassan	"	Chef du Service de Dév Durable
	Amaziane	Ahmed	"	Directeur de la Coopération Multilatérale
	Bennis	Abdelhadi	Assoc Ribat Al Fath	Président de la Commission de l'Env.
	Rejdali	Moh	Inst. Agron et Vét. Hassan II	Member of IUCN Medicinal plants Specialist Group
	Rattal	Abdallah	Dept of Env	Chef du Service de la Coop Multilatérale
Beneficiaries				
	Armari	Ibrahim	Village Assoc.	President
	Armari	Lhassen	Torord Village	
	Amondi	Abstilam	Torord Village	
	and 8 other villagers, member of the Village Association			
Swiss				
	Duvoisin	Claude	Ambassade	Conseiller
Algeria				
Project				
	Sekkal	Zohir	MEA	President and IUCN Regional Coordinator
	Meftah	Tewfik	ANN	National Coordinator
	Benkassir	Ammar	ANN UCD	Local Project Coordinator
	Yahiaoui	Zehjra	ANN UCD	Ingénieur pédologue
	Belacene	Abdelkarim	ANN UCD	Ingénieur agronome
	Djennes	Karim	ANN	Ingénieur d'Application; consultant plantes médicinales
	El Aid	Ezzi	ANN	Directeur Général
Partners				
	Mokhtari	Abdelmaumen	Service Agricole	Directeur
	Benslimane	Rachid	APC de Timgad	Président
	Benhouhou	Salima	Inst. Nat. d'Agronomie	Medicinal plants expert
	Yahiaoui	Nabila	SAIDAL	Ingénieur
	Belhadg	Mustapha	SAIDAL	Ingénieur
Beneficiaries				
	Salhi	Messaouda	Tarkate hamlet	Woman farmer
	Belouafi, ép Berrage	Khadra	Morry hamlet	Woman farmer
	Amrani	Hadda	Aïn Tarfa hamlet	Woman farmer
Swiss				
	Ould-Moussa	Rachid	Chargé de la Coopération	Ambassade Suisse
Tunisia				
Project				
	Abrougui	Ayachi	ATPNE	Volunteer
	Abrougui	Mohamed	ATPNE	Président
	Chaabouni	Adnéne	ATPNE	Consultant approche participative
	Barbouche	Naima	Inst. Nat. Agro.	Maître de Conf. + Coordinateur de

			de Tunis	l'Afrinet en Afrique du Nord
	Mouelhi	Md Faouzi	ATPNE	Coord. Loc. Tajerouine + Prof. de Français
	Merseni	Ayachi	ATPNE	Coord. Loc. Ghardimaou + Prof de Maths
	Mejdoub	Ramzi	IUCN	Regional Coordinator, IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme
	Hedhly	Souâd	IUCN	Assistante, IUCN North Africa Biodiversity Programme
	Ghrabi	Zeineb	Inst Nat Agron de Tunisie	Docteur en Biol; Botanique systématique – Plantes médicinales
	Turki	Mourad	Independent	Sociologist; trainer in participatory approaches
Partners				
	Abedessatar	Benminoud	ATPNE	Vice-Président
	Trbensi	Hamouda	Regional Gov.	Délégué de la Région
	Abrougui	Younes	Tajerouine	Maire
	Issaoui	Abdel-Hafid	Tajerouine	Omda (chef secteur)
	Mansouri	Brahim	Tajerouine	Omda (chef secteur)
	Hamada	Nabil	Min de l'Agric, de l'Env et des Res Hydraul.	Sous Directeur de la Conservation de la Nature (IUCN focal point in Tunisia)
	Maher	Mahjoub	"	
	Slah eddine	G Amouine	"	
	Belkhir	Zeineb	"	Directeur de la Conservation de la Nature et du Milieu rural
	Zouaghi	Monghi	Inst Nat Agron de Tunisie	Professeur d'Agronomie; Expert en Biodiversité
	Baouendi	Abdelkader	GEF Small Grants Prog	National Coordinator
	El Hili	Ali	Assoc des Amis des Oiseaux	President
	Gafsi	Henda	PAOTIC, Inter-Coopération	Directrice
	Bahri	Leila	UNFT	
	Hamza	Nabila	Min de l'Emploi	Chargée de Mission; experte en genre
	Ghouli	Ali	ANTPFS	Président
Beneficiaries				
	Hajroussi	Slah	Bouya Goum	farmer and future beneficiary
	Hajroussi	Md Lamine	Bouya Goum	farmer and future beneficiary
	Cherni	Fatma	Bouya Goum	wife of Md Lamine Hajroussi
	Houda	Houachia	Ghardimaou	Beneficiary, Phase II
Swiss				
	de Graffenried	Pierre	Swiss Embassy	Ambassador
	Schneeberger	Jürg	Swiss Embassy	Conseiller
Egypt				
Project				
	Batanouny	Kamal	Cairo Univ.	Professor of Ecology
	Zayed	Kamal	Cairo Univ.	Professor
	Hammouda	Faiza	National Research Center	Professor of Phyto-chemistry
	Allam	Aida	Menoufiya Univ.	Professor of Horticulture

	Sidky	Mahassen	Agric. Research Center	Researcher in medicinal and aromatic plants
	El-Missry	Mohammed	National Research Center	Professor of Phyto-chemistry
	Allam	Yousriya	National Research Center	Professor, Agricural Extension and Rural Development
	Fahmy	Afaf	Agric. Research Center	Researcher in Horticulture
	Jabar	Fahim	Medicinal Plants Center	Gardener
	Sabri	Omran	Medicinal Plants Center	Local Site Coordinator
Partners				
	Haroz	Mohamed Nabil	ESCHMP	Board Member
	Haroz	Abdulatif	ESCHMP	Board Member
	Hessin	Mohamed	ESCHMP	Board Member
	Haroz	Nejla	ESCHMP	Board Member
	El Halwagua	Asmaa	Treelovers Assoc	
	Zeitoun	Samia	Treelovers Assoc	
	El Guindy	Ahmed	Treelovers Assoc	General Secretary
	Barak	Hamdy	Governorate of Matruh	Governor
	Kishk	Abdel Hamid	Governorate of Matruh	Vice-President
	Galel	Hamed Abdel	Governorate of Matruh	Secretary
		Zaheera	Gender issues	Agriculturalist
Beneficiaries				
	Farag	Nasser	Bedouin	Responsible for nursery #1
	Kreimish	Khamis	Bedouin	Responsible for nursery #2
	Fadl	Farahat	Bedouin	Responsible for nursery #3
	Abdelsadek	Ghenewa	Bedouin	Responsible for nursery #4; 2 (out of 3) wives of G. Abdelsadek + 14 out of 24 of his children

Annex F.

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Annex G.

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL PROJECTS

By Ramzi Mejdoub

Mr Mejdoub participated in the field visits in Libya, Morocco and Algeria (and part-time in Egypt). His reports are as follows.

LIBYA

Regarding the project's staff, it is quite conformed with the fields of expertise required to implement the project activities:

- The scientific team : a Taxonomist (Dr. Fathi Erteeb) , a Botanist and Ecologist (Dr. Farag Abdulrahman) a Plant Physiologist (Mme. Samira Tushani) and a Medicinal plant Taxonomist and Ecologist (Mrs. Asma Humrani) and some graduated students originated from the sites of plants collection.
- The field work team : agronomists (Mr. Farag Gaith, Mr. Suleiman Belkair and Mr. Mustafa Issawi)

The medicinal plants survey, collection and identification were conducted by the students under the supervision of a university's professors in the following sites (Mssellatah, Al-Urban, Shaafeen (Protected area) and Gharian); the technical procedures used for this survey were conformed with the standards used in such investigation (collection the whole plant's parts, identification, drying, samples sterilizations, fixation in the herbarium).

The ethnobotanical studies were conducted with the participation of the local people, from each site of the plants collection, with the use of a standard questionnaire for the local knowledge assessment. These studies were gendered from the both sides of the interviewers and the interviewed people and they were reported in Arabic.

Concerning the plants propagation, the experiments were conducted in the laboratory and in the field

in two separated nurseries (Abou-Ghailan and Tobbi) and this is quite enough to master the propagation conditions:

- in the laboratory the conditions of seed germination were determined for the tested plants (7 medicinal plants), however the staff is sharing the facilities of the Faculty of Sciences and this causes some delays to achieve the results;
- in the nurseries the propagation by cuttings and seeds were tested for 25 plants (13 medicinal plants and the other for grazing, support drought or of other uses). For the procedures practiced by the staff in the field work are quite interesting and respond to the needs of such activity and besides the lack of expertise and experiences in this subject of medicinal plants propagation a good success was clearly seen in the two sites.

The transplantation of the seedlings and the plants gotten by cuttings are done in the field (Tobbi site – 6ha) in order to master the cultivation techniques, a good system of evaluation and monitoring of these experiments is established by the personnel of the field activity.

It is also very good appreciated the focus on the propagation of the endemic and the endangered species in Libya.

MOROCCO

Suite à la visite du terrain, ainsi qu'à travers les questionnaires, il été très claire que l'équipe travaillant pour ce projet répondait bien aux besoins pour l'implémentation des activités du projet ; ainsi pour ce qui est de l'utilisation des concepts de l'approche participative et de l'approche genre, l'équipe de la DREF (Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forets du Hauts Atllas-Marrakech) partenaire de la SPANA via Mr. Ben Hiba, Mr. Didouqen et Mme. Agzit qui sont très expérimentés dans l'utilisation de ces concepts pour la réussite des activités prévues. La création d'une CDL (Comité du Développement Locale : CDL) été un témoin de la réussite des ces approches dans le site du projet. Parallèlement, la participation et l'intérêt des populations sont bien prises en considération lors de l'implémentation des activités : extension de la culture de l'iris et du câprier et la plantation du caroubier et extension et aménagement du réseau de sentiers muletiers à travers le parc national de Toubkal.

Concernant la collecte d'informations sur le savoir-faire traditionnel des plantes médicinales, les données sont recueillies auprès des populations des douars de la zone du parc, des herboristes et de la bibliographie nationale et internationale ; 92 plantes ont été ainsi traitées. Ces informations ont été collectées d'une manière genrée d'une part de l'équipe qui a collectée ces données ainsi que de la part des interviewés.

La détermination des espèces en danger dans le PNT a été conduite par une équipe très bien expérimentée dans ce type d'exercice (dirigée par Dr. Ouhamou qui est un connaisseur de la végétation dans cette région), cette équipe a classifié 63 espèces selon leur degré de rareté (suivant les critères de l'UICN).

L'équipe qui est en train de conduire les essais au laboratoires (extraction et essais microbiologiques) est aussi très expérimenté dans ce cas d'exercice (Prof. Driss et Mme. Fraigui).

Conclusion
Bien que la capacité de la SPANA dans ce domaine des plantes médicinales est très limitée, l'équipe de l'implémentation des activités (experts et DREF) est bien conforme aux besoins du projet.
La composante genre est bien intégrée dans ce projet, malgré l'absence de la contribution du responsable genre (Mme. Dinia) dans ce projet.

ALGERIA

A travers la visite du terrain, ainsi qu'à travers les questionnaires, l'équipe qui conduit l'implémentation du projet (experts et consultants) est en conformité avec les besoins des activités en cours. Ainsi, au niveau de la Wilaya de Batna (site du projet) le staff de l'UCD (Unité de conservation et de développement de la faune et de la flore- Batna) est formé par trois ingénieurs (Mr. Belkassir, Mlle. Yahyaoui et Mr. Bellahcène) et conduit bien les activités de la mise en place de la banque de semences, la multiplication de quelques espèces médicinales (sous serre et en plein champs) et la collecte des informations sur ces plantes (17 espèces en herbier), cet équipe conduit aussi l'implémentation des activités de la culture des plantes médicinales avec la participation des trois familles en trois différents sites (Tarkate, Morry et Ain Tarfa). Bien que l'équipe est bien expérimenté en matière de vulgarisation, un manque d'expertise en approche participative, en genre et en plantes médicinales été très claire et nécessite plus d'assistance dans ces volets.

Au niveau de l'ANN (Agence Nationale pour la Conservation de la Nature), des essais de multiplication des plantes médicinales, la collecte des plantes médicinales et la mise en place d'une banque de semences sont entrain de se réalisés par Mr. Djenas au carré de multiplication des plantes médicinales.

Dr. Benhouhou conduit aussi un inventaire sur les plantes médicinales en Algérie dans les régions désertiques tout en collectant les informations sur les connaissances autochtones.

L'absence et le faible contact entre ces trois volets nous donne l'impression d'avoir trois projets séparés.

Conclusion

Pour le projet Algérien, la capacité de l'ANN et du MEA à conduire les activités sur le terrain est très favorable à une bonne implémentation du projet ainsi qu'à sa durabilité. Cependant, une collaboration plus développé entre l'experte en plante médicinales, l'équipe de l'ANN et celle de l'UCD sera plus fructueuse et plus profitable pour une meilleure conduite du projet. La collaboration du projet avec le SAIDAL et la phytothérapeute est très favorable pour assurer une durabilité du projet ainsi que son extension dans la région.

Annex H.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EVALUATOR

Meg Gawler is the Founding Director of *ARTEMIS Services – for Nature Conservation and Human Development*, a consulting firm specifically for the conservation and development sector, offering services in: evaluations, strategic planning, project and programme design, proposal development, workshop facilitation, training in project design and project cycle management, report preparation, writing feature articles emphasizing the human element in conservation, and photography.

Originally an aquatic ecologist, Meg has done scientific research on ecosystem functioning in both coastal and freshwater systems. She worked for over ten years in the Africa & Madagascar Programme of WWF International, and was active in fostering in WWF a culture of learning, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation. Meg holds a BSc with highest honours in Conservation of Natural Resources, and an MSc in Applied Ecology, both from the University of California at Berkeley. She is an EU-certified moderator, and a member of the American Evaluation Association and the European Evaluation Society. Meg has travelled extensively for her work, especially in developing countries. A dual national, she speaks English and French, and has long experience in multi-cultural situations.

Since founding *ARTEMIS Services* in 1999, Meg has worked with BirdLife International, the Forest Stewardship Council, Greenpeace, ICLARM - the World Fish Center, the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Ramsar Convention, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Sahelo-Saharan Interest Group, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Tour du Valat Biological Station, UNICEF, the World Bank – and especially with WWF and IUCN.

For further information, see http://www.artemis-services.com.

Annex I.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

(NB: The numbering of the operational recommendations continues on from the strategic recommendations in chapter 6.)

Project Design

21. It would be good to update the project activity framework and budget for the remainder of Phase III, with clear conservation and development goals and objectives for the activities to be undertaken, and with clear deliverables, responsibilities, timelines, and measurable indicators. This could include:
    - planning and budgetary provision for technical IUCN staff
    - a substantial budget line for professional translations.

IUCN HQ

22. There are opportunities for IUCN to strengthen the capacity of the WESCANA team in project administration, management and communications.

23. There is a need for clearer management procedures, to fill in the gaps, and reduce the overlap in roles and responsibilities between IUCN HQ and the Regional Coordination Office.

Project Management and Regional Coordination

Technical Support

24. IUCN may wish to assign a technical supervisor for the project, with experience in managing biodiversity and sustainable development programmes.

25. The project would benefit from technical support:
    - from international medicinal plants experts
    - on economic, social and biodiversity assessment methodologies
    - in community-based natural resource management, participatory approaches, and linking conservation and development
    - in gender approaches.

26. It would be helpful to make advance planning and budgetary provisions for IUCN support from the SSC Plants Officer, the IUCN Gender Focal Point, and Members of the SSC Specialist Group on Medicinal Plants.

Management

27. More active technical and management supervision of the project is needed. It would be good if the Regional Coordinator had greater support from his supervisor, as well as clear deliverables in a given timeframe. It would likely help if the Coordinator were to prepare monthly workplans, with specific targets for the month, and a report on progress made with respect to the targets set for the previous month. He would also benefit from regular weekly telephone contact with his line manager.

28. At the same time, the Regional Coordinator would benefit from greater autonomy and decision-making authority. He should be given responsibility for receiving and reviewing the reports from the national projects.

29. It will be important that the updated project activity framework and budget for the remainder of Phase III are communicated to the National Coordinators, and contract extensions should annex Terms of Reference specifying deliverables.

30. A simple, effective project monitoring system is urgently needed to keep the national and regional projects on track. An effective monitoring tool would be based on the revised activity framework, and the regional coordination could take the lead in implementing the monitoring system.

31. The regional coordination could take a major role in tracking spending at the national level, and making sure the money is moving. If there are problems with spending the budget, it is important to understand why, and to find solutions.

32. In order to fully play its oversight role, the project's Committee of Experts should really be independent of the project, bringing in outside expertise. The CoE may wish to consider reconstituting itself so that it can provide independent advice.

33. It would be good if the Regional Coordinator could find out what is holding up progress with the regional database in Libya, and take steps to remedy the situation.

34. In the future when training workshops are organised, it would be beneficial to carry out a needs assessment in advance to ensure that the training to be provided corresponds to the needs of the participants. Instead of being obliged to eat meals at the hotel for the whole time, participants would appreciate a small per diem instead, to cover some meals and local transportation.

Communications

35. Once the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Coordinator are clarified with respect to IUCN HQ, the revised Terms of Reference should be communicated to the National Coordinators.

36. The project would be improved by more regular contacts with the National Coordinators. The Regional Coordinator may wish to establish weekly telephone appointments with each National Coordinator, with a brief agenda prepared in advance of each call. If there is no urgent business, the call could be made anyway, as an opportunity to say hello and encourage networking.

37. The Regional Coordinator urgently requires an IUCN email account.

38. There is a need for a simple, clear, uniform reporting format that encourages reporting against targets. It would be best to provide this in digital form to the National Coordinators, so that they can simply fill in the required sections. The reporting period should be clearly specified, and the National Coordinators should be instructed to limit themselves to what actually occurred during this period when reporting on progress.

39. IUCN might consider providing training in report writing to all the Coordinators. A workshop could be scheduled for the next project meeting.

40. A common understanding is needed for terms such as "endangered", "rare", etc. It would be good if the reports from the National Coordinators would specify:
    - which plants are endemic to their country; which are restricted to their country and neighbouring countries; which occur throughout North Africa, and which also occur beyond North Africa

- in what part of its range, a given species is endangered, rare, etc.
- which plants are medicinal, and which have other economic uses.

41. The Regional Coordinator, with support from the Secretariat if necessary, should produce an annual synthesis report for submission to SDC. This report should be a strategic overview, written in narrative form, with the monitoring matrix filled out and included as an annex. The draft synthesis report should be circulated to the National Coordinators for comment, before submitting it to SDC.

42. The NABP web site should be given top priority, as it will provide a major contribution to enhancing networking within the region. It would be good if the site were up and running within 2-3 months. The site will have three portals: English, French, and Arabic. All of the project technical reports (including those on medicinal plants from Phases I and II) need be translated, and posted on the site. (The authors may wish to check these reports once again before they are sent out for translation.) The project is in need of immediate and continuing support for the website, for both structure and content.

43. In the interest of transparency, the revised programme framework and budget, together with the ToRs for the Regional and National Coordinators could be published on the project web site.

44. A monthly electronic bulletin, in English and French, might improve networking at the regional level. The bulletin may focus on communicating the project results, especially at the local and regional levels. It could also be a vehicle for the regional coordination to communicate to the National Coordinators what it has been doing over the last month.

45. A little colour leaflet (e.g., A3 folded in 2, or A4 folded in 3) could be produced in the three languages to explain what the NABP is all about.

46. To enhance communications, the project might wish to purchase a digital camera for the regional coordination.

47. The planned rhythm of meetings of the National Coordinators, team members, and the Committee of Experts every six months should be implemented. Each meeting would emphasize networking, learning and capacity building, and might include a site visit, a training workshop, and discussions and debates on sustainable development, participatory approaches, and gender.

48. To avoid confusion, the project Advisory Group (which is composed of the National Coordinators, the Regional Coordinator, a representative of IUCN HQ, and a consultant) could be renamed the "Project Team". To provide effective advice, it would be more logical for an Advisory Group to be external to the project team. It may be worthwhile to constitute an informal group of external experts who could advise the project.

49. IUCN may wish to look again at communications with Members in the region in order to ensure that their expectations are realistic, in terms of participating in IUCN projects where sub-contractors are chosen strictly on the basis of being able to produce deliverables. The role of IUCN National Committees in project oversight may require clarification in some countries.

Compendium

50. The Regional Coordinator and the Editor of the Compendium need to work closely together. If there are problems with contributions, as there have been in Libya and Tunisia, it would be good if the Regional Coordinator could find ways to motivate the experts in those countries to provide good monographs on time. It would be helpful for the Regional Coordinator and the Editor to systematically copy one another on all correspondence concerning the Compendium.

51. Given the delays, the project needs to determine if it is actually feasible for Libya to contribute to the Compendium. If this is not possible, then the Compendium could be produced by the other countries in the region who are able to contribute. If Libya does wish to be involved in the Compendium, then it will need to catch up quickly, and ensure that future deadlines are respected.

52. It would be good for the Regional Coordinator to ensure that the medicinal plants expert from Tunisia clearly understands the requirements for contributions to the Compendium. The Editor had sent out an example of an excellent monograph (with comments) that makes it quite clear what the expectations are. The Regional Coordinator might also assist in identifying a good French-to-English translator.

53. A revised Compendium workplan should be agreed to ensure that quality controls are respected, and the Compendium is published before the end of the project.

Best Practice Guide

54. It would be good to clarify the authors, expected contents and target audience for the best practice guide, and the feasibility of producing it. If production is determined to be feasible, it would be helpful to have a workplan for how it will be produced.

Training

55. It would be good to follow up on the proposal of the trainer for the workshop on participatory approaches to carry out an ex post assessment to see how participants have used their training in their work.

Egypt

56. To solve the disbursement bottlenecks, it would be good if the National Coordinator were to submit a tentative financial statement of expenditures for which the receipts are not yet available, in addition to his formal financial report with the validated receipts.

57. When preparing progress reports, the National Coordinator should be careful to limit the description of progress to the reporting period in question. For example, if the report is to cover the period from 1 November 2001 to 31 October 2002, then activities undertaken and results achieved before 1 November 2001 should not be included in the report.

Morocco

58. The project might benefit from closer relations with Dr Moh Rejdali, an expert in taxonomy, and member of the IUCN Medicinal Plants Specialist Group.

59. It would be helpful if IUCN could provide SPANA with advice on how to obtain expertise in setting up sustainable micro-credit schemes.

60. Awareness raising may be needed with the IUCN Members in Morocco and the National Committee about roles and responsibilities, and the importance of delivering results in IUCN projects.