



Certification to support conservation of endangered  
Mexican cacti

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Proyecto **Iniciativa Darwin**



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**Contents of the second stakeholders meeting of the project**

**“Certification to support conservation of endangered Mexican cacti”**

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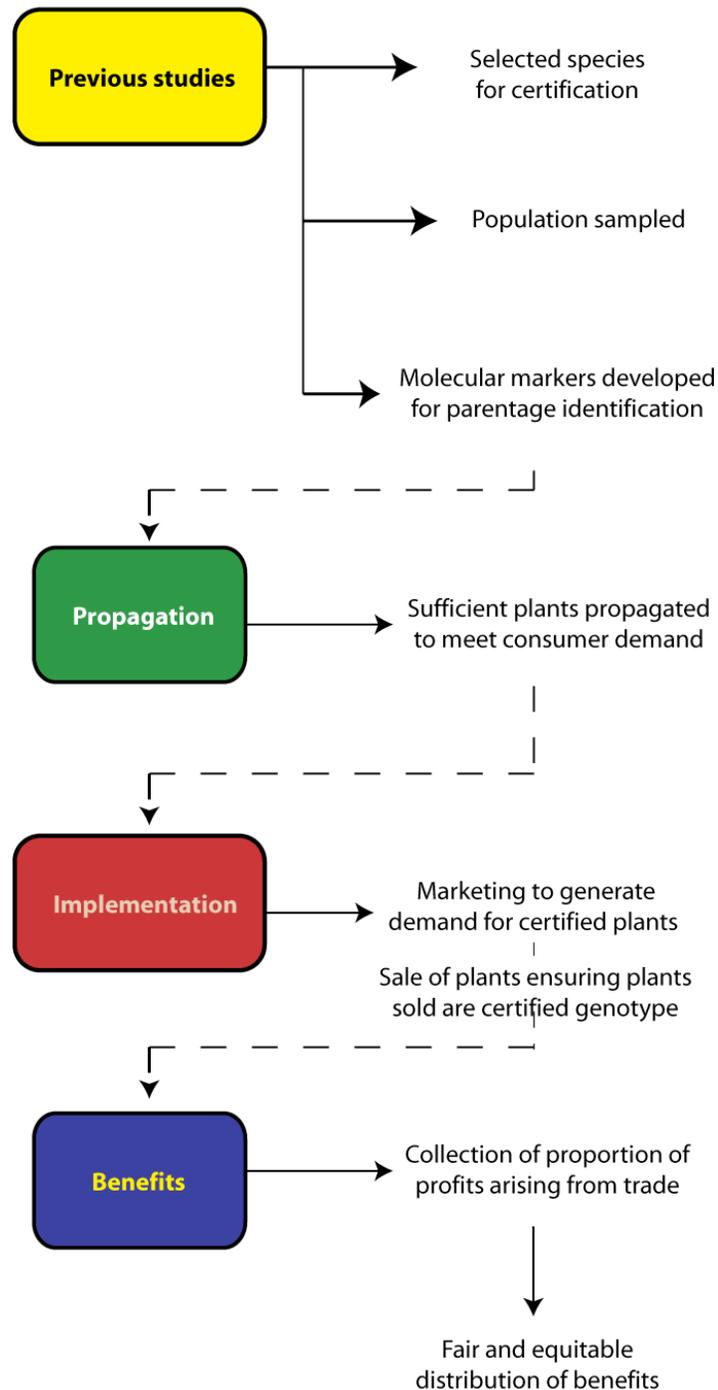


### I. Introduction.

The goal of the Darwin Initiative funded project “Certification to support conservation of endangered Mexican cacti” is to support the conservation, sustainable harvest and use of Mexican desert cacti, whilst ensuring that the various stakeholders get a fair and equitable share of the benefits arising out of their exploitation by the horticultural trade. This second stakeholders’ meeting aims to update participants to the progress of the technical part of the project and to raise questions about the implementation of a certification scheme. A first stakeholders’ meeting identified marketing of DNA certified plants as a tool to encourage legal trade, support conservation of endangered cacti and to promote fair and equitable distribution of profits arising from the horticultural trade in cacti.

Since the last meeting sets of DNA markers which can uniquely identify individuals, their clones and their progeny have been developed and tested for two species, *Echinocactus grusonii* and *Ariocarpus bravoanus* in national and international trade. Now that these technical goals have been met, the details of the certification scheme need to be discussed. The outstanding issues are organised here as a list of topics for open discussion in a workshop format generally following the scheme shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Flow chart of the molecular certification process for Mexican cacti.





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### **II. Provision of plants to consumers in Mexico.**

How will the plants be propagated to reach the consumer?

1) All propagation is done in a single place and then distributed to market plants?

- i) can the scale of propagation needed be achieved?
- ii) How big will the market be in Mexico?
- iii) Is it desirable to have only one outlet for certified plants?
- iv) Do we require more than one certified genotype?

2) The propagation centre sells or gives plants to commercial companies, either vendors or intermediate commercial companies who carry out propagation?

- i) Should all propagators and/or vendors be located in Mexico?
- ii) If propagation is not carried out by vendors themselves, are the vendors responsible for paying the green tax?
- iii) Should there be a limit on the number of outlets?
- iv) Is a network of registered certified nurseries possible or desirable?
- v) What about web-trade?

### **III. Provision of plants to consumers outside Mexico.**

Is all propagation for the international market carried out in Mexico?

Can sufficiently large numbers of plants be exported – what are the financial and bureaucratic limitations?

If propagation is not in Mexico, then who will carry out propagation?

If the propagators are not the vendors, then are the overseas vendors or the propagators responsible for paying the green tax?

Should there be a limit on the number of propagators and outlets?



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- A network of registered certified nurseries?
- Should web-trade be encouraged?
- Should overseas markets be facilitated and promoted through negotiated relationships with organisations such as RHS or Eden Project?
- What should be the opportunities for and responsibilities of such organisations?

### **III.1. Legal aspects relating to the exportation of plants.**

- Can prior informed consent to export plants be negotiated?
- Will Mexican authorities facilitate export permits for genetically certified plants?
- Should Mexican authorities establish an annual quote for exports?
- Should CITES authorities facilitate exportation and importation of these plants?
- Should the CITES certificate be obviated if vendors are registered or if the plants to export are certified?

### **IV. Rural communities as beneficiaries of trade.**

The benefits arising from trade in certified plants should be returned to the rural communities in the proximity of the source populations.

- How will a dialogue with the rural communities be initiated?
- How will their voice be heard in any decision-making regarding the fair and just distributions of the profits of the horticultural trade?
- What possibilities could be presented to these rural communities?
- For example, is there a different way to benefit the community other than economically?
- Should all funds raised through the “green tax” go to the local communities directly?



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### **V. The unit of certification and implementation.**

Should vendors or plants be the unit of certification? If vendors, should they be part of a national or international network of registered nurseries?

Should vendors have a tax break for marketing these plants?

If plants, then how should plants be clearly identified and tagged as a unique object of trade?

Who will be in charge and maintain the network of registered vendors?

### **VI. The identity and role of the certification authority.**

Should there be an international body in order to facilitate and police the trade of genetically certified plants? If so, should it be a new body or part of the CBD-national authorities?

How would this body manage the chain of custody for the genetically certified plants?

Should national and/or international environmental authorities be involved in the chain of custody?

Should a new body be implemented or should it be part of an already established body?

Should the chain of custody be kept by a national authority or should it be kept by the certification authority?

In case of a new certification authority, who will be supporting the infrastructure to keep the DNA bank, database and tests developed?

Who will be paying the salaries of technicians and consumables?



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Should it be desirable that national environmental authorities include the certification authority into their forensic and policing activities?

Is there a wider remit for a new certification authority, beyond the certification of Mexican cacti?

Should it be centred on cacti or into other families? Should the certification scheme be extended to other species and families?

What lessons from the Cactaceae can be shared into new projects such as the certification of orchids from Thailand?

Should we concentrate on highly demanded species or families and highly endangered taxa?

Should the certification scheme be more centred on horticultural species (eg. camelias, lupins, mamilarias) or should it have a focus on newly discovered species and varieties only?

If it is extended into other families from other countries who will be taking the leadership in the coordination of the efforts? Should it be the international body?

### **VI.1. Public awareness of the certification authority.**

Is it necessary that the certification authority develops public relationships with society in order to increase the awareness about trading legal certified plants?

Would it be desirable to advertise the power of genetic certification in order to deter illegal collecting and trade?