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Darwin Initiative Innovation: Final Report

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Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARNV013
Project title	Trialling Wild Harvest Improvement Projects for sustainable wild plant trade
Country(ies)	Morocco, Uzbekistan
Lead Organisation	TRAFFIC
Project partner(s)	FairWild Foundation, Global Diversity Foundation, Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association, Uzbekistan Association of organisations for the production and processing of liquorice and other medicinal plants
Darwin Initiative grant value	£199,791
Start/end dates of project	1 July 2023 – 30 June 2025
Project Leader's name	Louisa Musing (Cara Flowers until January 2025)
Project website/blog/social media	Trialling Wild Harvest Improvement Projects WHIPS for a sustainable wild plant trade Argan Oil & Liquorice: Wild Harvest Improvement Project Facebook: International Day of Argania 🌿 It's International Day of Argania! 🌿 Ever wondered what Argania is? It's the source of argan oil, a staple in countless hair and beauty products, and... By TRAFFICFacebook Facebook Linkedin: [Video] TRAFFIC on LinkedIn: #arganoil #sustainability #argania #morocco
Report author(s) and date	Louisa Musing, Cara Flowers, Oumayma Tchato and Jamal Rowe-Habbari, Anastasiya Timoshyna, 31st July 2025.

1 Project Summary

People have used and traded wild plants for millennia. Today, ingredients are traded globally in large and increasing volumes, for food, cosmetics, medicines, and more. The majority of plant species in trade (between 60-90%) are wild harvested. This raises both conservation and development concerns. Thousands of species are at risk from overharvest and habitat loss, with over 20% of species estimated to be threatened with extinction. Wild harvesters are often among the poorest and most marginalised people in society. They typically receive a low proportion of the value of final products. Commercialisation of wild resources is often promoted to reduce poverty and protect habitats – however, efforts often fail due to lack of capacity, market access, or unsuitable species selection. Inappropriate trade restrictions, aiming to protect threatened species, can hinder sustainable use.

Argan oil, targeted by one of the pilots, is prized internationally for use in cosmetics. In the arid Moroccan Southwest, argan forests cover more than 870 000 hectares and support 2.2 million rural people. Harvesters are mainly women from indigenous Amazigh communities, vulnerable to discrimination because of their marginalized status. Despite typically being organised in cooperatives – in some cases female-led and with organic certification – harvesters still face issues of low pay (failing to benefit from a near quadrupling of market price for argan oil) and poor working conditions.

Liquorice, another test species, is among the most widely used medicinal plants globally. Uzbekistan is in the top two producers of wild-harvested liquorice. Conventional harvesting in remote deserts of Karakalpakstan involves ploughing to access the roots causing habitat damage, soil erosion and local dust storms, exacerbated by desertification. In remote areas the annual liquorice harvest can be the only source of stable income, encouraging unsustainable rates of harvest.

TRAFFIC and partners developed the FairWild Standard as a framework for verification of sustainable and fair trade of wild resources. FairWild certification successes include more than 50 companies formally participating, with wild-plant ingredients sourced from 13 countries. However, participation in, and local benefits from, certification are held back by the challenges of developing sufficient sustainable supply in a sector where production is dominated by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with low capacity and tight profit margins. Wild plant supply chains are often long, complex and lacking in transparency, making market access difficult in terms of connecting sustainable producers to buyers.

Producers interested to achieve certification can be discouraged by the lack of short-term return on their investment in improved practices. Furthermore, in complex landscapes (such as our pilot sites) where multiple harvesters and buyers operate, there may be fundamental issues of resource management to resolve, requiring multi-stakeholder engagement, before certification can become feasible. The fisheries sector has faced similar challenges to certification, and developed “Fisheries Improvements Projects” (FIPs): multi-stakeholder initiatives that help fisheries work towards sustainability using step-wise action plans based on clear commitments to certification as the end goal. Despite clear parallels, this experience has never been applied to wild plants: a gap and innovation this project set to address.

2 Project Partnerships

The FairWild Foundation, Moroccan Biodiversity & Livelihoods Association (MBLA) and The Global Diversity Foundation (GDF) form members of the core project team along with TRAFFIC. Project partners respond to local demand and take a participatory and consultative approach to activities. This project was by design collaborative and multi-stakeholder in nature. TRAFFIC worked closely with two formal partners - the FairWild Foundation and MBLA, which were contracted for their work through sub-agreements. The FairWild Foundation was engaged to provide overall capacity building and guidance on sustainable and fair trade of wild plants in both Uzbekistan and Morocco given their expertise as a standard holder for wild plant and fungi harvesting. They are the standard holder for FairWild Standard and as such decide the criteria and conditions under which operations pursuing certification can be profiled on the FairWild website – similar to the role the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) plays in the fisheries sector. The FairWild Foundation and TRAFFIC have a long-established relationship which facilitated smooth communication and coordination between the two throughout the project, with in-person FairWild visits to the TRAFFIC offices being useful opportunities to plan activities. In Morocco, MBLA are a well-established NGO working in the High Atlas mountains where they train community members and local cooperatives in sustainable land use practices and commercialisation of local plants and plant products.

A kick off meeting was held at the start of the project to introduce each organisation and project focal points (SD1). Throughout the project, core team meetings were held every fortnight and provided an opportunity for updates, consultation and contribution to project planning and implementation. During these meetings, the core team also tracked delivery and impact, giving the opportunity to course correct and make decisions regarding project activities and timelines as the context changes. A consultative approach was taken in wider project meetings with collaborative activities, such as stakeholder mapping undertaken together. Progress against the workplan was discussed in each project meeting so that all members were appraised of progress. In addition to the expertise of the partners, TRAFFIC drew on their relationship with a variety of internal and external experts in fisheries and sustainable trade. This includes those working in FIPs at the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which has been an integral stakeholder in developing FIPs. Private sector actors producing wild harvested products have expressed interest in this work and will be engaged in the next project year. Other synergies have begun to be developed with regional TRAFFIC offices.

There have also been several key points for open and closed stakeholder participation, consultation and participatory design as the project evolved. These included 1) Feedback sessions to the Wild Harvesting Improvement Project (WHIP) framework draft; 2) Stakeholder mapping both internationally and locally in Morocco and Uzbekistan to identify who needed to be involved and how; and 3) Multi-expert group (MEG) insight and feedback as a mechanism to help steer the framework.

With pilots in Morocco and Uzbekistan, we included a wide range of governmental, international and local stakeholders in the process. In 2024, MBLA initiated and consolidated partnerships with key local stakeholders and institutions to support the implementation of sustainable practices in the argan value chain. During this phase, MBLA identified and selected argan tree cooperatives that showed potential and willingness to engage in biodiversity-friendly harvesting practices (SD2). This was done in a participatory manner, ensuring community buy-in and alignment with both ecological and socio-economic objectives. In

collaboration with local partners, such as Les Centres d'Appui à l'Entreprenariat et Développement Économique Local (CAEDEL), Office National du Conseil Agricole (ONCA), and other international organizations including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement (IECD), MBLA coordinated a series of field visits to these cooperatives. These visits were essential for conducting initial evaluations, building trust, and setting the stage for more technical interventions (SD2).

From January to June 2025, MBLA focused on continuing this work through cooperative coordination, awareness-raising, and hands-on support. By engaging with the communities directly, MBLA enabled a better understanding of the importance of certification by local stakeholders. In parallel, MBLA participated in a national consultation on the preservation of Moroccan gastronomy, which included a focus on the argan tree as a cultural and ecological symbol with UNESCO. Additionally, during a networking event with IECD, MBLA presented the key challenges and opportunities associated with the argan value chain, such as climate change impacts, commercialisation pressures, and capacity gaps in cooperatives.

The WHIPS project partnership was rooted in local needs and included stakeholders in decision-making, planning, and monitoring. Strong relationships were built through shared values around sustainable development and biodiversity protection. These partnerships especially with cooperatives and local institutions are expected to continue beyond the end of the project.



Photo: Cooperative member in Morocco harvesting Argan fruit.

3 Project Achievements

3.1 Outputs

The project successfully achieved its intended outputs as laid out in the log frame.

Output 1. Existing FIP guidance and processes adapted to wild harvesting and draft comprehensive practical framework for WHIP developed

1.1, Identify relevant experts on wild harvesting, sustainability standards, and landscape management from CSOs, local governments, and the private sector and invite them to join the Multidisciplinary Expert Group (MEG).

In Q1, the terms of reference (ToR) for the MEG was drawn up, feedback sought, and it was finalised (SD3). During Q2 (Jul-Sept 2023), a list of potential MEG members was drawn up in consultation with the core project team (SD4). This list focused initially on those we know to be receptive and interested in wild plant harvesting or who have experience and insight into fisheries improvement projects. Attention was paid to gender balance and regional experience. A balance between those engaged with FairWild or receptive to FairWild and those with less exposure was also utilised. The MEG were formally contacted in Q5 for a kick-off meeting (SD5) and to request initial feedback on the draft WHIP concept and initial framework. Over the course of the project, the MEG were convened ten times, mainly on a monthly basis, between May 2024 and March 2025, to provide advice and guidance on the development of the draft framework.

1.2 Literature review on FIP best-practice guides, existing improvement projects, local contexts of wild harvesting.

In Q1, the ToR for the research into FIPs and their relationship to wild plant harvesting was created. The project manager attended a sustainable supply chain coalition event ([Rethinking Value Chains | Putting People & The Environment First](#)) in October 2023 (SD6), with a focus on building external relationships for this work and linking it further to other supply chains experiencing similar barriers to sustainable and ethical trade. This workshop informed some of the research and literature review by engaging with other sectoral colleagues regarding supply chain interventions and lessons from certification that have aimed to maximise benefit for communities and the environment (SD6). The final literature review was completed in Q4 and disseminated to the wider MEG group for review. Following initial feedback meeting in May 2024 (SD5) and additional input from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), MSC, Biodiversify, and other MEG members, and the document finalised (SD7).

1.3 Analysis and synthesis of FairWild, MSC, and FIP frameworks to produce draft WHIP framework.

The literature review (SD7) included analysis and synthesis of FairWild, MSC, and FIP frameworks alongside other relevant mechanisms and standards. Core project team members provided feedback in Q4 to inform the framework and refine it further. As mentioned above, input was received from FSC, MSC and other stakeholders and additional feedback was sought from the core project team members, particularly those based in Uzbekistan and Morocco. It was subsequently summarised into a shorter WHIPs framework document which was used for consultation and an infographic was created to elucidate the WHIPs approach (SD8, SD15).

1.4, Invite and collect public comment on the draft framework by posting on the TRAFFIC website and sharing via social media and at relevant meetings and events (e.g. Biofach trade fair).

In Q3, a draft webpage was created for the WHIPs project. This [webpage](#) went live in Q4 and was used to disseminate information regarding the project in Uzbekistan and Morocco. The consultation process for the WHIP began in Q5 through various platforms. The WHIPs project manager attended the [International Society for Ethnobiology Congress](#), where the WHIPs concept was presented. The project manager also spent a week in the field with MBLA accompanying them on initial meetings with landscape stakeholders. This supported stakeholder mapping and undertaking an initial assessment of potential cooperative operations (SD2). In April 2024, the project lead from FairWild also attended the Global Baobab Congress in London where the WHIP concept was shared and promoted, and where further potential stakeholders were identified (SD25). In Through trade fairs (such as BioFach 2024 and 2025 – world's largest organic trade fair), the WHIPs concept was promoted and opened for comment to industry experts. In 2025, TRAFFIC and FairWild used BioFach opportunity to promote the WHIP concept and hold a Liquorice Round Table Event (see 2.5 for details). In consultation with MEG, it was decided that a better approach to the draft framework review is facilitating targeted feedback, rather than open consultation via website.



Photo: Liquorice roundtable, BioFach 2025, Nuremberg, Germany (February 2025)

1.5, Conduct a review workshop with MEG and finalise the draft framework, for further testing in the pilot landscapes.

Between Q5 and Q7, various rounds of feedback were received from the MEG group to revise the WHIP framework for pilot testing in Uzbekistan and Morocco. This was an iterative process with baseline feedback also then informing further revision of the framework through ongoing discussion and reflection with the MEG and partners in country. The final framework meeting was held in October 2024 (SD9).

Output 2. Pilots of the draft WHIP framework in landscapes in Morocco and Uzbekistan

2.1, Conduct stakeholder mapping exercise within the two pilot landscapes to determine who should participate in the trial WHIPs.

Between Q4 and Q7, both Uzbekistani and Moroccan stakeholders were mapped in their respective landscapes (SD10, SD11, SD12, SD13). It should be noted that activities in Morocco were delayed by the severe earthquake on 9th September 2023. The epicentre of the earthquake was in the High Atlas Mountains, where project partners GDF and MBLA carry out the majority of their work with rural communities. The project implementation in Morocco was therefore significantly impacted and as a result the preparation for the pilot in Morocco restarted in November 2023. In May 2024, the project manager spent a week in the field with MBLA accompanying them on initial meetings with landscape stakeholders, which included supporting stakeholder mapping. FairWild experts also visited both target sites in Uzbekistan to support the stakeholder mapping exercise. In Q7 a stakeholder mapping workshop was held online on 25th October 2024 to support project partners in developing stakeholder assessments further and thinking through key messaging for influencing (SD11). Furthermore, the findings from the baseline assessments (Output 2.2) were also used to support the stakeholder mapping exercise (SD12 and SD13).

2.2, Work with third-party consultants to conduct the baseline assessment of the two pilot landscapes against the FairWild standard.

A third-party consultant was engaged to assess the two pilot landscapes against the FairWild Standard and identify a suitable area/area for improvement. In August 2024, the baseline assessment was carried out in Morocco with the support of a consultant hosted by MBLA (SD12). As part of this process five cooperatives were selected by MBLA for further collaboration in the future. It was difficult to engage a coordination partner in Uzbekistan which meant that progress was slower than envisaged. As a result, engagement via the GIZ work that FairWild was undertaking was chosen as the appropriate approach. Following the collaboration between TRAFFIC, FairWild and GIZ, the baseline assessment for Uzbekistan took place in November 2024 (SD13). One company in Uzbekistan, Wonder Organics, has now completed FairWild certification following the initial assessment in November 2024.

2.3, Meet with relevant stakeholders within each pilot landscape to gather feedback on WHIP framework, review findings of the baseline assessment, and establish how to address issues identified.

In Q5, the project manager spent a week in the field with MBLA, joining initial meetings with stakeholders across the pilot landscape. These meetings served to introduce the FairWild Standard and certification process to potential WHIPs stakeholders and to conduct a preliminary assessment of cooperative operations (SD2). This engagement helped evaluate both the feasibility and potential added value of pursuing certification for participating cooperatives. In total, six meetings were held with cooperative stakeholders and six with government representatives. In the second week of November, MBLA convened a multi-cooperative meeting focused on identifying improvements for wild harvesting practices across the landscape. A separate stakeholder meeting was also held in Uzbekistan in November 2024 to gather local input on the WHIPs framework and review baseline assessment findings. The Liquorice roundtable meeting in February 2025 served as another opportunity to receive direct feedback from stakeholders along the supply chains producers to brands, and from certification/standard-holding organisations.

2.4, Revision of draft WHIP framework according to the stakeholder meetings and pilot landscape findings.

Following the baseline assessments, stakeholder meetings and piloting, the WHIP framework was revised and adapted accordingly. Between Q6 and Q8, TRAFFIC worked to refine the WHIP framework in consultations with the core project team, and in Q9 requested final sign off and input from the broader range of stakeholders included in the MEG group (SD14). In Q9, the WHIPS framework underwent an internal technical review by TRAFFIC experts and was designed by TRAFFIC's communications team for public distribution (SD15).

2.5, Promotion of WHIP concept to industry actors sourcing from the landscapes to secure commitment to further implementation (e.g. through one-to-one meetings, webinars, trade fairs, etc).

Members of the core project team attended various events in 2024 and 2025 to discuss the WHIPs work and draw upon learning from other supply chain initiatives. As mentioned above in Output 1.2, the project manager joined the 'Rethinking Value Chains' coalition work planning and retreat in October 2023 in order to build connections with other value-chain initiatives in the sustainability arena. In Q4, the project manager and FairWild project team members attended BIOFACH in February 2024. The team used this opportunity to promote WHIPs and meet with potential interested industry representatives and donors. In Q5, TRAFFIC and FairWild attended the [Natural & Organic Products 2024](#), an event dedicated to natural and organic products that provides an opportunity to discover thousands of exhibitors' brands and new products, network with industry representatives and learn about the latest trends. By attending this event, the core project team built further industry connections particularly in the cosmetics sector that were relevant for argan and liquorice supply chains and six additional contacts were secured.

In Q6, the project manager attended the Conservation Optimism Summit [Conservation Optimism Summit 2024 – Conservation Optimism's 2024 Summit in Oxford, UK](#) for one day to present on the WHIP concept (SD16) and work thus far in Morocco as part of a joint event organised by FairWild. Four new contacts were made from industry and consultancy services. TRAFFIC has joined the [Conservation Now](#) network as a result and further feedback on the WHIPs concept was received and integrated. In Q8, TRAFFIC and FairWild attended BIOFACH 2025 to once again promote WHIPs and meet with potential interested industry representatives and donors. At this event, FairWild and TRAFFIC hosted the Liquorice Round Table (SD17) where liquorice producers from Karakalpakstan, FairWild, TRAFFIC, and European buyers met to discuss sustainability in the industry and WHIPs as a solution. During the event, industry and certification experts identified key challenges to sustainable liquorice sourcing in Central Asia—including long root maturation, regulatory inconsistencies, and market dependence on uncertified exports. Despite these barriers, the region was recognised as having strong potential. Practical solutions like the WHIPs framework and FairWild certification were presented as viable paths forward (SD18). In Q9, FairWild attended in-cosmetics Global in Amsterdam in April 2025, using this opportunity to engage in dialogue with argan producers and processors about the WHIPs concept and certification, which may lead to FairWild-certified argan.

2.6, Capacity-building with stakeholders (e.g. harvester communities, government officials) to enable working with the FairWild standard, with needs established through Activity 2.3.

The Uzbekistan liquorice harvesting site has stakeholders who have been engaged with FairWild implementation. Therefore, there was familiarity with FairWild principles and certification processes prior to this project commencing. In the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, the cooperatives had not been through a certification or pre-certification process and had not received training in the FairWild Standard. In May 2024, three MBLA team members were trained remotely in the FairWild standard including auditing principles and how to complete the management plan (SD19). This training was deemed successful and helpful by participants. Following on from this, the cooperatives selected were engaged through training, awareness sessions, and field evaluations on sustainable wild harvesting practices aligned with FairWild (SD19). Overall, 5 SMEs in Morocco (Essaouira-Agadir) participated in the pilot phase of the project. Each SME engaged in capacity-building sessions, including initial sustainability assessments of their landscapes and harvesting practices, as well as the co-development of WHIPS. In terms of harvesters, approximately 110 individual harvesters were involved across the five Moroccan SMEs. For example, in December 2024, MBLA held an event where WHIPS was discussed with local cooperatives (SD27) to establish the potential uptake of the concept. During the meeting, it was noted that women harvesters face challenging working conditions, including low and unstable pay, lack of recognition, inadequate equipment, and physically demanding tasks. Participants also highlighted that while many harvesters were previously unaware of the FairWild Standard, there was strong interest in its adoption if it could offer better prices or long-term contracts, with a clear need for practical, inclusive training to support its implementation and preserve traditional knowledge. Stakeholders in Uzbekistan have also been trained in FairWild standards. Assessments of 7 companies resulted in draft management plans and the creation of road maps for working with these companies, with 3 expressing strong interest in FairWild certification. Overall, 30 harvesters were trained in Uzbekistan. Training and capacity-building measures continued to be provided through the aligned GIZ project "Ecologically Oriented Regional Development in the Aral Sea Region" (ECO-ARAL), to which FairWild Foundation is providing technical support on the topic of sustainable wild liquorice production.

Output 3. Global stakeholders have access to the WHIP framework and guidance for its application

3.1, Create and execute an Influence Plan, including stakeholder analysis, key messaging, and identification of dissemination opportunities.

A stakeholder and influence map were developed for the overarching project goal which includes national level stakeholders' analysis for each landscape, including the stakeholder mapping exercise (see Output

2.1) (SD10, SD11, SD20, SD21). These were working documents that evolved and developed throughout the project. The events mentioned prior in this report, were scheduled as a result of consultation and discussion on the approach as outlined in the influence plan (SD21).

3.2, Produce the final WHIP framework, alongside a multi-stakeholder guidance document, for further testing and development beyond the close of the project.

As mentioned under Activity 2.4, TRAFFIC continued to refine the WHIP framework in consultations with the core project team. Once finalised, the final WHIP framework was sent for final sign off and input from the broader range of stakeholders included in the MEG, which was approved. A summary document on the pilot landscapes in Uzbekistan and Morocco (Annex 2 of the WHIPs Framework, SD15), which outlines the outcomes of the two pilot studies and the distinct challenges and opportunities for implementing WHIPs in each context, was developed. This summary, along with the full WHIPs Framework—which explains the rationale, methodology, and components of the WHIP approach, and into which FairWild contributed technical inputs—was shared with relevant stakeholders. In Q9, the WHIPs framework underwent an internal technical review by TRAFFIC experts and was designed by TRAFFIC’s communications team for public distribution (SD15). It was also decided to create a short two-pager for the WHIPs framework for public distribution to stakeholders (SD28).

3.3, With input from MEG and the pilot landscapes stakeholders, conduct a scoping exercise and produce a report establishing how the WHIP approach can be further developed beyond the end of the project.

In Q8 and Q9, the core project team developed a summary document which aimed to evaluate the concept and explain it to a wider audience. It considers the future direction for a WHIP, feasibility, and who might be involved in both Uzbekistan and Morocco. The summary document includes information on recommendations from the baseline reports, summaries of feedback received from stakeholders that were consulted in each landscape and some options for a WHIP in the landscape. The final summary document on the piloting of the WHIP concept in Morocco and Uzbekistan has been included as an Annex in the final WHIP framework.

3.4, Disseminate the framework, guidance, and scoping report to stakeholders identified in the Influence Plan for further action, e.g. local governments, businesses, CSOs, and funding agencies.

In October 2024, the project manager attended an event organised by BfN in Germany - Maintaining Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Worldwide. While the event was primarily focussed on commodities, it presented a good opportunity to highlight the connection between wild plant and fungi harvesting and efforts to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem services. It also presented a useful opportunity to highlight the importance of broadening the European Union (EU) Regulation on Deforestation-free Products to other less visible commodities. Furthermore, in Q8 and Q9, FairWild pursued a research consultancy around argan, using the findings and recommendations from the WHIPs framework and summary document (outlined in Activity 3.3) to inform an engagement strategy for the argan sector. At tradeshow events like in-cosmetics Global, FairWild continued the dialogue with argan producers and processors, which may lead to FairWild-certified argan. Furthermore, more than ten stakeholders, including local institutions (CAEDEL, ONCA), international partners (UNESCO, IECD), and cooperatives, reported positively on the potential of the WHIP framework to improve sustainable harvesting practices and offer long-term market and social benefits in Morocco. As mentioned under Activity 2.6, local cooperatives also expressed interest in the uptake of FairWild Standard. The Liquorice Round Table held at BIOFACH in February 2025 was a key milestone, facilitating direct engagement with industry leaders and raising awareness about the importance of sustainable practices in liquorice production. The summary document on the pilot landscapes in Uzbekistan and Morocco (Annex 2 of the WHIPs Framework, SD15), outlines the outcomes of the two pilot studies and the distinct challenges and opportunities for implementing WHIPs in each context. This summary, along with the full WHIPs Framework—which explains the rationale, methodology, and components of the WHIP approach, and into which FairWild contributed technical inputs—was shared with relevant stakeholders. In Q9, TRAFFIC’s communications team also developed a short two-pager for the WHIPs framework for public distribution to stakeholders (SD28).

3.2 Outcome

The project outcome is that a conceptual framework for “wild harvest improvement projects” is in place, with stakeholder buy-in, focusing on best-practices for enabling certification and sustainable use of wild plants in multi-user landscapes. This has been evidenced by project reports, presentations, as well as minutes from project team meetings and MEG meetings. These have been stored along with other data on the SharePoint system which project members have access to. The project has documented responses from local authorities, private sector partners and framework users as well as implementing a survey of

stakeholders (SD12 and SD13). The project manager also developed survey questions to guide informal discussions with key stakeholders regarding feedback on WHIPs (SD22). Assessments against the FairWild Standard (SD12 and SD13), gap analyses and action plans are also provided as further evidence (SD15). The baseline assessments included assessment of the barriers and challenges faced in wild harvesting of each species. These have been used to inform discussion in each wild harvesting community. Much discussion and feedback were specific to each locality, however, some common elements were present:

Long-term investment in collaborative processes for improving wild harvesting environments is required. Encouraging collective action among harvesters, operators and other stakeholders will require building long term relationships with commitment that spans several harvesting cycles. For example, in Uzbekistan there is limited culture of cooperation and exchange among liquorice harvesting operators. In Morocco, there is a strong culture of agriculture cooperatives. However, these are often in competition with one another and little representation for harvesters in multi-stakeholder fora.

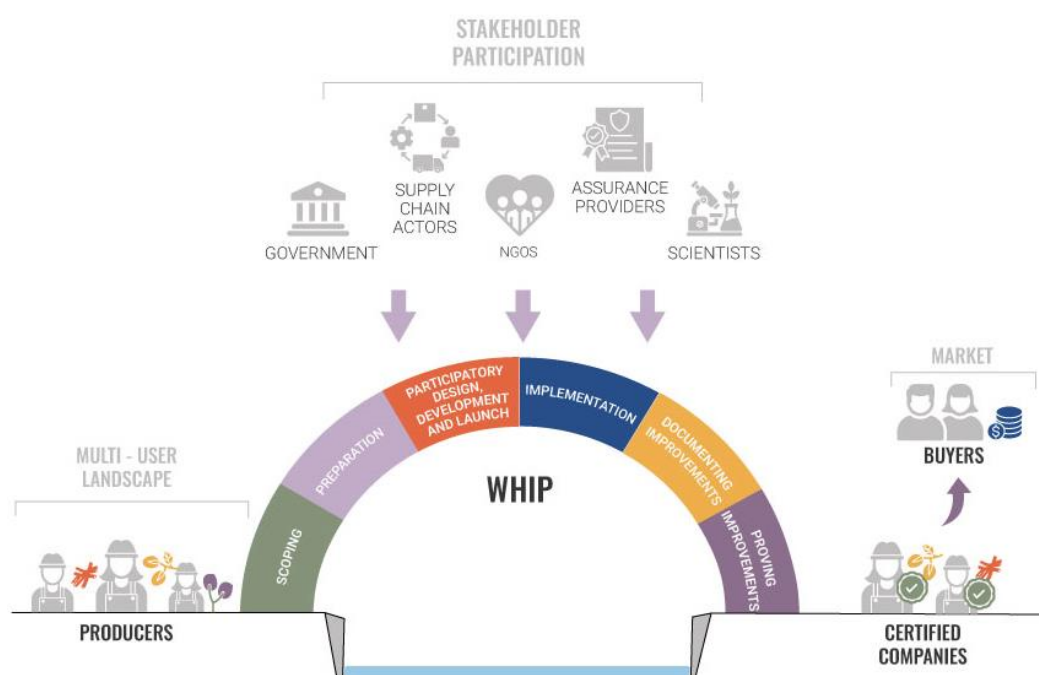
Buying practices must improve. Buyers can incentivise change by demonstrating a commitment to improved social and environmental practices. While improving the latter can lead to new markets opening up, it is important that buyers support improvements and don't drive prices low thus exacerbating existing challenges such as poor pay, limited labour rights and environmental degradation.

Market access. This is a consistent challenge not only in liquorice and argan communities but more broadly in wild plant supply chains. Market development with ethical actors who want to encourage sustainable and socially conscious supply chains is required but equally will take time to develop. Initial conversations with the private sector are promising. However, it is likely that SMEs will be crucial in stimulating this market in the long term.

A whole supply chain approach. Linked to the above, a whole supply chain approach is required to engender change and improve conditions. To achieve this a long term multi-stakeholder initiative focussing on one supply chain would help to demonstrate the value of the WHIPs model for improving systemic issues that require both government and private sector support.

Improving physical infrastructure. Encouraging investment in key physical infrastructure such as quality testing for products and processing facilities is important for both liquorice and argan.

Investment in social infrastructure. This could take the form of raising awareness of new legislation that supports women's autonomy and role in each harvesting locality. There are legislative changes in both Uzbekistan and Morocco (such as improvements in the rights of women or minimum wage measures) which could benefit harvesters but awareness of these remains low. Other social infrastructure such as fora to encourage knowledge sharing and support for harvester communities, financial support schemes, investment in youth enterprise for wild plant supply chain development and involvement of the digital sector could also be useful in each locality.



Prior to the start of this project, there was no guidance available to adapt a FIP to a wild plant harvesting context. As a result of this project, such a framework has been developed. It was effectively tested and validated in Morocco and Uzbekistan, with strong stakeholder engagement and commitment to sustainable wild plant harvesting and FairWild certification principles. For example, MBLA contributed to the co-creation and local adaptation of the WHIP framework by mobilising key institutional and community actors, raising awareness, and coordinating field activities that directly aligned with the outcome indicators set out in the logframe. Stakeholder engagement and enthusiasm has also been generated through attendance at various trade fairs and events with governments, private sector and stakeholders along the supply chain. In Morocco, more than ten stakeholders, including local institutions (CAEDEL, ONCA), international partners (UNESCO, IECD), and cooperatives, reported positively on the potential of the WHIP framework to improve sustainable harvesting practices and offer long-term market and social benefits. Agreement on practical steps, through participatory visits and technical consultations, stakeholders reached a common understanding of the steps required to align cooperative practices with FairWild Standard, both in terms of environmental sustainability and gender-sensitive social inclusion. Meeting minutes for project meetings and email correspondence with MEG members are available to support this. Comments and feedback received on the draft framework, as well as the revised versions, can be shared upon request. The final version of the WHIPs framework is available for the project team and MEG and published on the TRAFFIC website (SD15).

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

All outcome and output level assumptions were monitored throughout the course of the project.

Assumption 1: was ultimately proved correct. FIPs provide an interesting and impactful model for certification pathways and improvements to social and environmental benefits within supply chains. They have had a level of investment and industry engagement far greater than that experienced by the wild plant harvesting sector. FIPs were also developed with a very different level of stakeholder support, notably political, private sector and non-governmental financing and engagement. Nonetheless, the multi-stakeholder approach warranted further testing and application in wild plant harvesting environments. Based on the research conducted as part of this project, FIPs provided a useful model to help address some of the challenges in uptake and further investment which wild harvesting operations have experienced. FIPs have been less successful in addressing challenging in small-scale fisheries and lessons from these contexts are the most relevant for wild plant harvesting environments. This is because the challenges in terms of market development, investment and representation of less powerful stakeholders have similarity. Discussion with MSC and others in the fisheries sector also highlighted the challenges of improving human rights and social conditions in the sector. While it was felt that environmental improvement had been achieved, social improvements were harder to demonstrate. This may be the case for wild plant harvesting if larger scale investment for a FIP-like model is attained. It will be important to pay particular attention to improving specific metrics and outcomes. This is where certification is likely to be particularly useful in measuring change and providing an incentive for improvement.

Assumption 2: was ultimately proved correct throughout the duration of the project. Stakeholder relationships are complex and the context in each environment distinct. Transferable lessons across landscapes were high and raised incomes were not an outcome that was achievable within the current scope of the project. For example, although the FairWild Standard (which the WHIPs concept is based on) aims to improve livelihoods, the project timeline was too short to measure improvements on the ground. In each context, market development and mobilisation of all stakeholders on a regular and consistent basis would be essential. We feel this is still a potentially rich avenue of exploration and merits a larger project that devotes resources to both environmental and social goals over a longer time period.

Assumption 3: assumption is correct. Throughout the project, FairWild continued to evolve, for instance the [Version 3](#) of the Standard was published by the FairWild Foundation in December 2023, during the project's lifetime. FairWild has a framework which enables monitoring of improvements against a baseline. This is essential to understand how improvements have been undertaken and their ultimate impact. The project consulted with other sectoral initiatives, notably the MSC and FSC. They each manage relevant sectoral certifications and have a wealth of experience and expertise to offer. In particular, the FSC's livelihoods support approach that has involved development of an Economic Viability Tool is highly relevant. This tool could be adapted to WHIPs and implemented by any future WHIP multi-stakeholder group to drive dialogue, cooperation, improvement and a collective improvement approach.

Assumption 4: did not hold. Completion of the WHIP framework by the end of the original Q2 period was not possible due to various factors outside of the control of the project team.

Assumption 5: risk management remained an important assumption. Specific risk management activities included assessing the position of wild plant harvesting in the mosaic of livelihood strategies at each

location to understand relative importance economically, culturally, socially of this work. In addition, assessment of risks to overharvesting was included in baseline assessments. FairWild developed a new risk management framework during these two years which benefitted from discussion during this project.

Assumption 6: was partially correct. Harvester communities were willing to engage with the project. Producers and other stakeholders were also willing to engage under certain parameters. For example, once support from the liquorice industry was secured, one liquorice producer became FairWild certified, and both communities participated in the baseline assessment process. However, concerns about sharing harvesting information appears to have been a barrier to the enthusiasm of some liquorice producers to involve themselves in a WHIP. In the Moroccan landscape, more than ten stakeholders, including local institutions (CAEDEL, ONCA), international partners (UNESCO, IECD), and cooperatives, reported positively on the potential of the WHIP framework to improve sustainable harvesting practices and offer long-term market and social benefit. To hold effective multi-stakeholder dialogues, it is necessary to invest in the long-term and have an intensive period of preparation and investment in trust building. The scope of this project investigated the possibility of building this kind of dialogue and scoping the utility of engaging in this to address specific barriers to wild harvesting to achieve tangible improvements. The development of a WHIPs framework during this project period demonstrated that stakeholders are willing to engage, that there is a desire to discuss barriers and opportunities and that given the right investment change is possible.

Assumption 7: remained correct throughout the duration of the project. Feedback on the concept was received from the broader stakeholder group, the MEG, as predicted, validating this assumption.

3.4 Impact

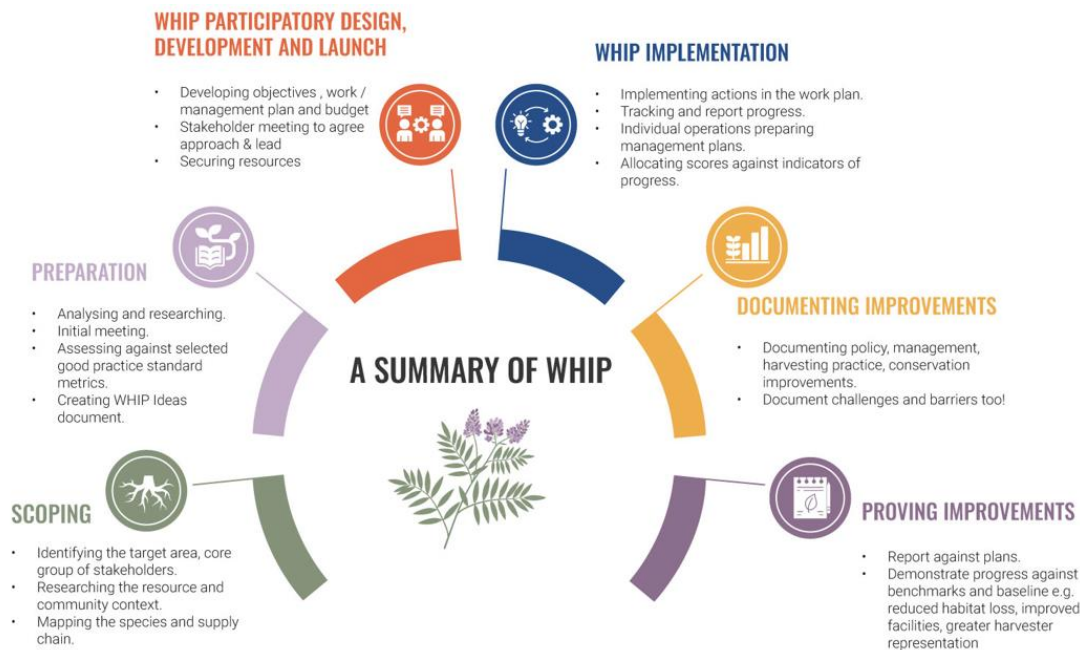
Our narrative theory of change shows that if the social and environmental risks and opportunities of harvesting operations in each landscape are assessed and communicated to stakeholders in the supply chain, who are brought together to understand these risks and opportunities, then actions can be agreed and set out in an action plan, including for best practices across the landscape. If these assessments and agreements are in place, then supply chains will become more transparent. Within the pilot landscapes, implementation of these agreed action plans (beyond grant period) will enable stakeholders to progress towards FairWild certification, with improved labour conditions and fair payments, and more sustainable harvesting practices that will enable wild plant populations to thrive and support livelihoods into the future. Scaling beyond the pilots, if FIPs are tested and adapted, and WHIPs framework and guidance are communicated across the wild-plant sector globally, then additional wild-plant supply chains will have clearer pathways towards sustainability, and greater numbers of companies (buyers and suppliers) will engage with WHIPs, benefitting wild-harvested plants and the communities that depend on them.

At project end, it contributed significantly to biodiversity conservation by promoting sustainable wild harvesting practices in both Morocco and Uzbekistan. In both countries, wild plant harvesters have benefited from increased visibility as they work towards certification, with greater engagement from industry and key stakeholders supporting improvements to sustainable sourcing. This visibility has also contributed to broader support for sustainable sourcing practices, directly benefiting biodiversity by ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and providing financial incentives for their protection. As a result, wild plant populations are better preserved, and harvesters are rewarded for their role in conservation. By piloting the WHIP framework and applying the FairWild Standard, the project introduced structured, context-specific methods for responsible harvesting that protect argan and liquorice ecosystems and mitigate the risk of overexploitation. This approach directly links biodiversity conservation with community empowerment, facilitating multidimensional poverty reduction.

In Morocco, the project facilitated increased awareness and capacity among cooperatives, particularly women-led groups, enabling them to access certification through FairWild. This has opened pathways to premium markets, providing more stable and fair income opportunities. Through institutional partnerships, the project supported the professionalisation of these cooperatives, raising their visibility and increasing their legitimacy in the value chain. Argan value chain stakeholders from harvester, cooperative, union, government and civil society entities in the Agadir area were consulted and engaged in the project. This is the first time that a project has attempted to consult with such a broad range of actors in the sector and it is clear from initial meetings that there is a desire to continue dialogue. Other initiatives to improve sustainability in the argan sector exist but these appear to be siloed in specific international private sector initiatives. Furthermore, by promoting the sustainable harvesting of liquorice through the development of the WHIP framework, the project raised significant awareness about social and environmental challenges in the sector.

In Uzbekistan, assessments of 7 companies resulted in draft management plans and the creation of road maps for working with these companies, with 3 expressing strong interest in FairWild certification. As mentioned under Output 2.2, one of the companies was supported to develop a new trade partnership with

a buyer (a German trader), and has now become FairWild certified. The Liquorice Round Table held at BIOFACH in February 2025 was a key milestone, facilitating direct engagement with industry leaders and raising awareness about the importance of sustainable practices in liquorice production. The project's efforts to communicate the WHIPs framework, both through industry events and publications, have generated strong support for implementing the framework as a model for other wild plant supply chains globally.



The WHIPs project has contributed to broadening discussion across the sector and planting the seeds for wider cooperation to improve both environmental and social outcomes. This is sorely needed as the baseline assessment demonstrated pay below Moroccan minimum wages. There is also a lack of cooperation to cut out middlemen who increasingly dominate the sector which reduces direct economic benefits to local harvester communities. These challenges are well known but will require a collective response to effectively address.

As the baseline report outlines, the sector is large and involves stakeholders from a broad range of economic and social sections of Moroccan society. Given the cultural and economic importance of argan there is huge scope for further work that attempts to build a national forum to encourage cooperation to reduce deforestation, improve restoration and increase benefits to communities who rely on argan as part of their livelihood strategy. This project work has shown that to effect significant change, deeper engagement with local government and the most powerful members of the private sector alongside unions and cooperatives would be ideal. Government staff from the National Agency for the Development of Oasis Areas and Argan Trees (ANDZOA), Ministry of Agriculture, fisheries, rural development, water and forests consistently articulated the need for longer term investment in building national sector wide improvement for the sector. The WHIPs framework provides a foundation for further discussion and activity.

4 Contribution to Darwin Initiative Programme Objectives

4.1 Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The project contributed to Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), by offering a framework that supports the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets (5 and 9). By focusing on the sustainable and productive use of natural resources, the project aligns with the CBD's objective of promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity.

In Morocco, the project aligns with Morocco's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), especially in its efforts to integrate biodiversity into agriculture and rural development policies, with a focus on fragile ecosystems such as the argan biosphere. Although the project did not formally submit reports to Moroccan convention focal points, a comprehensive summary report was made available to relevant stakeholders (SD2 and SD19). This report included detailed information on stakeholder engagement, cooperative selection, field assessments, and progress toward alignment with the FairWild Standard, contributing to the overall reporting efforts to donors and biodiversity platforms. While no direct communication with national convention focal points occurred during the project, the project's visibility and

collaborative approach, particularly through the involvement of key institutions like UNESCO, ONCA, and CAEDEL, have supported Morocco's broader commitments under global environmental agreements. In Uzbekistan, the project and WHIPs concept has been presented to CBD and CITES focal points in the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection & Climate Change, alongside the ongoing GIZ ECO-ARAL programme, with the notable future opportunities to support the national-level implementation of these MEAs for wild plant species management.

The partners further reflected on the potential for WHIPs to provide a valuable tool for Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), especially in locations where the harvesting of threatened species is occurring, offering a pathway for more sustainable trade practices, with initial discussions taking place in relation to other conservation projects focussing on CITES-listed species in trade (such as DAREX012).

4.2 Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

Wild plant harvesters in key biodiversity landscapes benefit from increased visibility as they work towards certification, and from commitments by industry and other stakeholders to support improvements in sustainable sourcing. This supports biodiversity by ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and provides financial incentives for their protection. Poverty reduction may result from increased reliability and quality of trade in wild plant materials, as this enhances income stability for harvesters and related communities. The project introduced a novel approach to implementing fair trade standards in the context of wild plant harvesting. By developing the WHIP, it aims to improve human wellbeing when and if these frameworks are adopted.

Although Morocco is classified as an Upper Middle-Income Country, the project specifically targeted rural and economically marginalised communities, including women-led cooperatives within the argan biosphere reserve—a region marked by poverty, environmental fragility, and exclusion from value chains. Through the implementation of the WHIP framework, the project has contributed to multidimensional poverty reduction by strengthening capacities, improving access to knowledge, and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. Project beneficiaries included cooperative members (including women) and local civil society partners.

The project contributed to improved wellbeing in both Uzbekistan and Morocco through:

- Capacity building for wild plant harvesters and cooperative members on sustainable harvesting practices and certification standards (FairWild), which has increased their understanding of ecological sustainability, market demands, and long-term resource management strategies.
- Social inclusion, especially for women and rural groups, by supporting their roles in harvesting, decision-making, and training processes that align with the FairWild social criteria, ensuring that they benefit from fairer practices and greater empowerment within the value chain.

The project has also contributed to the global public good by advancing a replicable model (WHIP) that integrates biodiversity conservation with inclusive value chain development. By testing this approach in bio-culturally rich yet economically vulnerable landscapes, the project has generated valuable insights and tools that can be applied in other biodiversity hotspots. Below are some notable achievements:

- Successful piloting of the WHIP framework in Morocco and Uzbekistan with active engagement from cooperatives and alignment with stakeholders.
- Evaluation of FairWild readiness in the argan and liquorice sector, with substantial participation from local communities, which has helped pave the way for future certification efforts.
- Establishment of robust partnerships that will help sustain the approach beyond the life of the project, ensuring that the lessons learned and the methods developed continue to benefit communities in the long term.

4.3 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	X
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

In Morocco, women's cooperatives have pushed for better salaries and working conditions in recent years. In Uzbekistan, wild liquorice is typically harvested by vulnerable populations in remote desert and steppe and has limited traceability. While liquorice harvesting is primarily by men, women are mostly involved in the first processing steps of washing, cutting and drying the roots. As a result, gender equality and social inclusion (and representation) were considered in the project design. Women and marginalised groups are often involved in wild plant harvesting as it offers a flexible additional source of income and in many places forms a key aspect of traditional livelihood strategies. GESI assessments were included in the ToRs for both Morocco and Uzbekistan to identify how women could have meaningful participation in a WHIP, how a WHIP could improve equity for women and marginalised groups, how a WHIP approach could ensure a GESI approach (SD12 and SD13; SD23 and SD24). In the pilot sites, the project provided training on gender issues associated with wild harvesting, and gender considerations will be integrated into the action plan developed for the WHIPs. Therefore, the working conditions and position of women, indigenous people and minority groups involved in wild harvesting have been strengthened.

4.4 Transfer of knowledge

As the project sought to innovate a conceptually new approach to wild plant sustainability, a key objective was the communication and dissemination of findings to stakeholders. The summary document on the pilot landscapes in Uzbekistan and Morocco (Annex 2 of the WHIPs Framework, SD15), outlines the outcomes of the two pilot studies and the distinct challenges and opportunities for implementing WHIPs in each context. This summary, along with the full WHIPs Framework—which explains the rationale, methodology, and components of the WHIP approach, and into which FairWild contributed technical inputs—was shared with relevant stakeholders. These documents were intended to inform practitioners, policy-makers, and private sector actors about both the potential and limitations of WHIPs, enabling them to make evidence-based decisions about whether and how to pursue this model. The overarching response from stakeholders has been positive and the next step in the process is continued piloting. The Liquorice Round Table, held during the 2025 BIOFACH conference, also constituted a key knowledge transfer event. It brought together industry representatives, sustainability experts, and other stakeholders to explore social and environmental challenges within the liquorice sector and to present the WHIPs concept in a practical, accessible format. This facilitated real-time exchange of insights and encouraged sector-wide reflection on improving sustainability in wild plant value chains. In addition to these platforms, the project also contributed to knowledge transfer through:

- Various conference participation where the WHIPs project was presented and discussed.
- Stakeholder workshops and technical consultations held in Morocco, which engaged local institutions, cooperatives, and civil society in co-developing and refining the WHIP concept.
- Ongoing bilateral communication with experts, FairWild partners, and relevant NGOs, ensuring the knowledge generated reached practitioners in real-world harvesting and sourcing contexts.

Knowledge transfer also took place through the WHIPs project website, where materials were made available for public consultation. In addition, TRAFFIC developed an infographic to clearly communicate the WHIPs concept to a non-technical audience, enhancing the accessibility of project findings (SD8).

Stakeholder mapping workshops and feedback consultations in Morocco and Uzbekistan served not only to gather input but also to build capacity and share technical understanding of sustainable harvesting and certification processes at the community level. Through these efforts, the project has played a meaningful role in increasing awareness of the interlinkages between wild plant harvesting, sustainability, and inclusive development—and in sharing practical tools and reflections that may guide future interventions.

4.5 Capacity building

Capacity building was an important part of the project in both pilot countries/sites.

By training staff from the liquorice harvesting company which became certified, FairWild built their capacity for sustainable harvesting, ethical human capital management, and responsible business practices. FairWild also trained Rashid Kalmuratov, building core capacity in the liquorice industry producer's association of Uzbekistan to which he belongs. In Morocco, capacity-building was focused on local partner MBLA and the women-led cooperatives within the argan biosphere. Three MBLA staff members—two women and one man—were trained remotely in the FairWild Standard, including auditing principles and management planning. This training enabled MBLA to play a central role in supporting stakeholder engagement and pilot implementation in the region. MBLA's increased technical knowledge and visibility in the sustainable harvesting sector has strengthened their position as a regional expert organisation. Among the cooperatives engaged, many participants were women who had not previously received formal training in sustainability standards. Through capacity-building sessions focused on FairWild Standard, these cooperatives developed a clearer understanding of sustainable wild harvesting, traceability, and the requirements for market access.

Although no formal promotions were reported during the project period, the enhanced knowledge and exposure for both MBLA and Uzbekistani actors has increased their status regionally within their respective networks. For example, MBLA staff were invited to co-present at the International Society for Ethnobiology Congress in May 2024—an opportunity which recognised their growing expertise. Capacity-building was inclusive, with training intentionally targeted at marginalised groups, particularly women and rural cooperatives. This aligns with the project's GESI objectives, aiming to ensure more equitable participation in natural resource governance and market engagement.

5 Monitoring and evaluation

TRAFFIC employs continuous monitoring and evaluation to allow for course correction and adaptation as the project requires. The project theory of change helped us to ensure that the activities and outputs lead to the project outcome. The impact of the project rested on the project activities leading to improved stakeholder coordination both across the landscape and industry. This was measured within the context of the project influence plan and associated stakeholder mapping. A second initial aspect of our impact is that stakeholders understand social and environmental risks of harvesting operations. This was measured through assessing activity impact and training received and implemented as well as broader coordination activities and outcomes observed. Activities related to this are planned for year 2 as per the log frame and workplan.

In addition to the means of verification indicated in the log frame this project is reporting against standard indicators agreed with DEFRA (Annex 3).

Evaluation is an important aspect of project monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning. Partners regularly reported against the log frame through updating workplan activities at the bi-monthly project meetings and providing supporting documentation such as reports produced.

6 Lessons learnt

The project team has remained committed and dedicated to progressing the WHIPs concept throughout its lifetime. MBLA's long-standing experience in Morocco, particularly in engaging cooperatives and navigating complex, multi-use landscapes such as those involving argan, medicinal and aromatic plants, and honey production, proved invaluable in building community trust and aligning efforts with biodiversity goals. TRAFFIC's strong connections within the conservation and sustainable trade communities enabled access to global expertise on FIPs and certification systems, including those relevant to wild-harvested products.

Several lessons emerged from the implementation of this project, many of which have value for future Darwin Initiative efforts and similar sustainability-oriented projects in complex socio-ecological contexts.

1. Flexibility and Adaptive Management Are Essential

The project faced several significant, unforeseen challenges outside of its control. Most notably, in 2023, the earthquake in the Atlas Mountains required MBLA to redirect its core activities towards immediate

humanitarian response. While this reduced capacity for biodiversity-focused activities temporarily, it also strengthened MBLA's internal systems and partnerships. These improvements now provide a more resilient foundation for long-term engagement in the region.

MBLA was transparent and proactive in communicating these shifts, and re-established a dedicated project lead with valuable experience working with cooperatives, which helped restore momentum in the final year of the project. The lesson here is that selecting in-country partners with strong local credibility and agility in crisis situations can ensure project continuity even during external shocks.

2. Human Resources Planning Should Include Contingency Strategies

In Uzbekistan, FairWild faced difficulties due to the sudden illness and departure of a key local consultant. This created delays in implementation, highlighting the importance of having a broader pool of potential consultants or partners identified early in the planning phase. Going forward, projects operating in countries with complex governance or logistical challenges (like Uzbekistan) should ensure local continuity plans and consider drawing on regional staff, as TRAFFIC has begun to do in Central Asia.

3. Early Engagement of the Private Sector Is Key

While local cooperative engagement was strong, a lesson learned was the need to bring in larger private sector actors—particularly those with global buying influence—much earlier in the project cycle. Their early input into the research design would likely have improved the relevance and uptake of the WHIPs framework and helped drive long-term investment and advocacy momentum. Future projects should consider convening a high-level industry roundtable during the inception phase.

4. Knowledge Sharing Tools Should Be Standardised and Scalable

The stakeholder mapping process was a particularly useful learning component. The development of a standardised guide for stakeholder mapping helped ensure that each country team approached engagement systematically. This process also linked national maps to the global stakeholder analysis and influence plan. Future Darwin projects could benefit from adopting such standardised tools early on, supported by participatory workshops to ensure shared understanding and localisation.

5. Evaluation and M&E Systems Should Be Lean but Inclusive

Given the complexity of measuring biodiversity and social impacts across diverse pilot sites, the project benefitted from integrating flexible monitoring tools aligned with the FairWild standard. However, there remains a need to better capture nuanced social outcomes, particularly those related to gender equity and tenure security. Future projects might benefit from co-designing indicators with community participants to ensure more grounded and relevant metrics.

Recommendations for similar projects:

- Build in contingency planning for local staffing and political or environmental disruptions.
- Engage high-level private sector actors as co-designers of research and implementation strategies.
- Use standardised tools for stakeholder mapping and influence planning, adapted to local contexts.
- Design flexible but meaningful M&E systems that capture both environmental and social outcomes.

7 Actions taken in response to Annual Report reviews

No. 1 - A change request was submitted in December 2024.

No. 2 - It was foreseen that the 'Uzbekistan Association of Organisations for the Production and Processing of Liquorice and other medicinal plants would be a partner. However, due to unforeseen challenges with the consultant who was unable to take up the role as interlocutor the link with the association was primarily managed by FairWild outside of Uzbekistan.

No. 3 – Evidence has been submitted along with this final report in the form of Supporting Documents (SD).

No.4 – Detailed comments have been provided in the Assumptions.

No. 5 – Detailed comments have been provided in Conventions, Treaties or Agreements supported by Darwin Initiative.

No.6 - This project has attempted to support the enabling environment that will contribute to poverty reduction, but the project scope does not directly impact poverty reduction.

8 Risk Management

Two major risks impacted the project during its lifetime, requiring adaptive responses from the project team. One of these—a risk already identified in the original project risk register—related to staffing changes within partner organisations. The second, an unforeseen event, was the devastating earthquake in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco in 2023, which significantly affected the operating environment and temporarily shifted MBLA's focus on humanitarian assistance. The earthquake had wide-reaching consequences, particularly for MBLA, whose staff and target communities were directly affected. As a result, MBLA redirected core activities and secured funding from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to support immediate relief efforts. This reduced their capacity to engage in biodiversity and sustainable livelihood programming during that period. However, this period also strengthened MBLA's internal operational and crisis response capacity, and they have since re-established full participation in project activities, including the appointment of a new project focal point.

In Uzbekistan, a further risk materialised when a key consultant became seriously ill and was no longer able to continue their work. While not foreseen in the original risk framework, this underscored the challenges of relying on single individuals for specialised in-country roles. To mitigate the impact, the project manager engaged with other partners and explored alternative support channels, including the mobilisation of TRAFFIC's regional staff in Kyrgyzstan.

In response to these challenges, the project made several adaptations to mitigate disruption and maintain delivery:

- National stakeholder mapping in Morocco and Uzbekistan was rescheduled and scaled to match partner capacity, while ensuring that insights still inform the framework development.
- Activities were sequenced flexibly to prioritise research and global engagement components while allowing in-country partners time to reorient.
- Project meetings were used to identify potential support mechanisms and succession planning for local consultants.
- Project was extended by three months, allowing new TRAFFIC project manager who stepped into the role in early 2025 to adaptively manage the delivery.

No additional high-impact risks were identified in the final year of the project. However, these experiences reinforced several lessons for risk planning in similar future projects, including:

- The need for contingency planning for staff turnover and local capacity gaps.
- The importance of building organisational resilience among in-country partners.
- The value of flexible project design that allows for adaptive sequencing in response to environmental or political shocks.

Overall, despite these disruptions, the project has maintained its strategic direction and delivered on its core objectives, in large part due to the strength of partner relationships, transparent communication, and adaptive management.

9 Scalability and Durability

The WHIPs project was designed with a strong emphasis on long-term sustainability and transferability, both within the pilot landscapes and more broadly across the wild plant harvesting sector. A key objective has been to ensure that the knowledge generated, tools developed, and relationships established can endure beyond the grant period and continue to contribute to social and environmental improvements in wild plant value chains.

Stakeholder awareness and engagement has been central to the project's scalability. Throughout the project, TRAFFIC and FairWild proactively created opportunities to raise awareness and secure interest in the WHIPs approach. For instance, the BIOFACH trade fairs in 2024 and 2025 provided key platforms to introduce the WHIPs concept and engage directly with stakeholders along the supply chain—from small businesses to industry platforms like GIZ and the Export Promotion Desk. In addition, the Liquorice Round Table held at BIOFACH 2025 brought together practitioners and buyers to discuss WHIPs within a live supply chain context, increasing interest and knowledge around sustainable sourcing.

Connections were also made to other relevant initiatives within TRAFFIC and FairWild's networks. The MEG included representatives from projects in Nepal and Madagascar, allowing the project to draw on and

feed into wider learning across wild plant and fungi-related value chains. This cross-project fertilisation is expected to embed the WHIPs approach within broader strategic and operational thinking, facilitating its uptake in new regions and commodities.

There is early evidence of interest from potential adopters. For example, several private sector partners and cooperatives in Morocco, including ONCA and CAEDEL, expressed their support for continued engagement with the WHIPs framework. FairWild also trained a staff member of a liquorice-harvesting company in Uzbekistan which went on to achieve certification—an indication of both demand and readiness to adopt the approach. These partners have recognised the business case for improved practices, including the potential for enhanced market access, premium pricing, and reputational gains.

The project's alignment with national policy goals has further supported its long-term viability. In Morocco, WHIPs activities supported the objectives of NBSAP, particularly in promoting sustainable rural livelihoods within the Argan Biosphere Reserve. Although no formal policy changes have yet resulted, the collaboration with institutions such as UNESCO, ONCA and CAEDEL has positioned the project to influence future rural development and biodiversity strategies.

From an organisational legacy perspective, the WHIPs concept is now embedded within the strategic direction of FairWild, TRAFFIC, and MBLA. The project has contributed to FairWild's reflection on how to support producers entering its pre-certification scheme, potentially leading to a more formalised WHIP pathway to certification. Training materials, gap analysis tools, and the WHIPs framework are all available to support replication, and several cooperatives have already used these tools to begin aligning their practices with FairWild standards.

In terms of capacity building, local partners—particularly cooperatives in Morocco and staff in Uzbekistan—have developed the foundational knowledge needed to continue applying the WHIPs approach. MBLA, now re-engaged following the 2023 earthquake response, retains strong links with cooperatives and institutional partners, which will support ongoing local engagement. TRAFFIC's continued presence in Central Asia, including regional staff in Kyrgyzstan, offers a base to sustain progress in Uzbekistan and explore scale-up opportunities elsewhere.

Looking ahead, the WHIPs project team will continue to disseminate findings, particularly the findings on next steps and feasibility in the two pilot landscapes (Annex 2 of SD15) and maintain relationships with key actors. The WHIPs framework will be published on the TRAFFIC website and shared with FairWild's global network and the two-page summary document will also be used to promote the WHIPs concept globally. Additionally, interest from multinational buyers—through engagements at events like Rethinking Value Chains and in-cosmetics Global—presents an opportunity to scale the model through private-sector-driven investment in responsible wild harvesting.

In summary, the most durable achievements of the project include 1) The development of the WHIPs framework and associated tools; 2) Strengthened capacity among cooperatives and institutions in Morocco and Uzbekistan; 3) Strategic relationships with government, civil society, and industry actors; and 4) A documented evidence base that will inform future sectoral decisions. While Darwin Initiative funding has ceased, the relationships, tools, and momentum generated by the project provide a strong platform for ongoing impact, further adaptation, and scale.

10 Darwin Initiative identity

Throughout the project, the Darwin Initiative has been consistently acknowledged across communications materials, events, and partner activities. The UK Government's contribution has been clearly recognised, with the Darwin Initiative logo displayed on key project outputs, including the WHIPs Framework, the pilot summary reports, presentation slides, and internal briefings.

In Year 1, the team laid the foundations for project visibility by developing a stakeholder-informed communications plan, encouraging partners—particularly MBLA—to begin collecting human stories from the field that highlight both social and environmental dimensions of wild plant harvesting. While these plans were partially disrupted due to the 2023 earthquake in Morocco, MBLA and project partners resumed communications efforts in 2024.

A short film focusing on cooperatives involved in argan harvesting was produced to mark International Day of Argania (10 May 2024). This was accompanied by a blog post and social media assets developed by TRAFFIC (Facebook: [International Day of Argania](#) | [🌿 It's International Day of Argania! 🌿 Ever wondered what Argania is? It's the source of argan oil, a staple in countless hair and beauty products, and... | By TRAFFICFacebook | Facebook](#) LinkedIn: [\[Video\] TRAFFIC on LinkedIn: #arganoil #sustainability #argania #morocco](#)) in collaboration with FairWild and MBLA. These communications included Darwin Initiative branding and referenced the project's UK Government support (SD26). In tandem, the project launched a dedicated WHIPs landing page on TRAFFIC's website, providing background information, downloadable

resources, and links to relevant events. The website serves as a central repository of project knowledge and hosts a branded copy of the WHIPs Framework. The project team also made use of organisational social media channels (primarily FaceBook and LinkedIn) to share project updates and event participation. Posts included Darwin Initiative acknowledgements and were cross-promoted via partner channels, though there was no standalone project account.

While awareness of the Darwin Initiative in the host countries (Morocco and Uzbekistan) was relatively limited at the outset, visibility increased over time through consistent branding, participation of national institutions (e.g. ONCA, UNESCO, CAEDEL), and dissemination of project results. Among partners, MEG members, and local stakeholders, the Darwin Initiative is now recognised as a funder of innovative work at the intersection of biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods, and ethical trade.

In summary, the Darwin Initiative has maintained a clear and distinct identity throughout the WHIPs project, and its support has been widely acknowledged in all key communications and public-facing materials.

11 Safeguarding



12 Finance and administration

12.1 Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2024/25 Grant (£)	2024/25 Total actual Darwin Initiative Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)	21,028			
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	21,028			

Staff employed (Name and position)	Cost (£)
Louisa Musing, Project Leader	
Anastasiya Timoshyna, Project Supervisor	
Amy Woolloff, Technical Input	
Rebecca Thomas, Project Administration	
Francesca Marcolini, Communications	
Jamal Rowe-Habbari, FairWild Business Engagement	
Charity Payton, FairWild Financial Administration	
Abdellah Aghraz, MBLA Technical Lead	
Oumayma Tchato, MBLA Certification and Labelling Lead	
Ferdousse Elidrissi, MBLA Financial Administration	
TOTAL	

Capital items – description	Capital items – cost (£)
TOTAL	

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
Audit costs accrued	
TOTAL	

12.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project	Total (£)
Information to be updated in the final financial report	
TOTAL	

Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building evidence, best practices and the project	Total (£)
Information to be updated in the final financial report	
TOTAL	

12.3 Value for Money

This project maximises value for money by partnering with existing initiatives, including MBLA parallel projects, and GIZ ECO ARAL initiative in Uzbekistan, avoiding costs associated with establishing a new presence in the project area, which also builds economies of scale. The overall premise of the project – of adapting and trialling learning from a different sector, and finding ways to best leverage the commitment and financial resources of industry in support of sustainable production – proved to be a cost-effective way towards strengthening mechanisms to promote sustainable practices in the wild-plant harvesting sector.

The application of the FairWild Standard and principles helps ensure equity; including tenure, management authority and use rights, benefit sharing, fair contractual relationships, and benefits (fair prices) for collectors. Applying these existing standards is also cost-effective.

Along the project delivery links have also been made to other projects (including those funded under Darwin Initiative) to explore potential for synergies and uptake of the WHIPs concept into the implementation – this is a cost-effective way to embed the concept into new projects.

TRAFFIC policies and systems ensured financial efficiency. We identified and minimised key cost drivers (including staff time, meetings, travel, and consultant fees) without compromising quality. Competitive pricing was sought for all purchases, including multiple quotes prior to decisions on suppliers and travel. Travel was planned well in advance and kept to a minimum, using the lowest economy airfare and using virtual/hybrid meetings wherever possible. TRAFFIC reimbursed reasonable actual expenses incurred when travelling and generally does not issue per diems apart from small daily allowances for incidentals as per HMRC guidelines.

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against final project logframe for the life of the project

Project summary	Progress and achievements
<p>Impact</p> <p>Wild plant harvesters in key landscapes for biodiversity benefit from increased visibility as they work towards certification and from industry and other stakeholder commitments to support improvements to sustainable sourcing.</p>	<p>This project contributed significantly to biodiversity conservation by promoting sustainable wild harvesting practices in both Morocco and Uzbekistan. In both countries, wild plant harvesters have benefited from increased visibility as they work towards certification, with greater engagement from industry and key stakeholders supporting improvements to sustainable sourcing. This visibility has also contributed to broader support for sustainable sourcing practices, directly benefiting biodiversity by ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and providing financial incentives for their protection. As a result, wild plant populations are better preserved, and harvesters are rewarded for their role in conservation. By piloting the WHIP framework and applying the FairWild Standard in both countries, the project introduced structured, context-specific methods for responsible harvesting that protect argan and liquorice ecosystems and mitigate the risk of overexploitation. This approach directly links biodiversity conservation with community empowerment, facilitating multidimensional poverty reduction.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>The conceptual framework for “wild harvest improvement projects” is in place, with stakeholder buy-in, focusing on best-practices for enabling certification and sustainable use of wild plants in multi-user landscapes.</p>	
<p>Outcome indicator 0.1 By end of Q8, the WHIP framework has been developed and tested in at least two landscapes.</p>	<p>The WHIP framework has been completed (SD15, SD28) and tested in Morocco and Uzbekistan. Evidence provided in section 3.2.</p>
<p>Outcome indicator 0.2 By the end of Q8, at least ten organisations (government, private sector, civil society) have reported positively on the potential of the framework to improve harvesting practices, to leverage resources and commitments, and mitigate the risk in wild plants supply chains.</p>	<p>The framework was effectively tested and validated in Morocco and Uzbekistan, with strong stakeholder engagement and commitment to sustainable wild plant harvesting and FairWild certification principles. For example, in Morocco, more than ten stakeholders, including local institutions (CAEDEL, ONCA), international partners (UNESCO, IECD), and cooperatives, reported positively on the potential of the WHIP framework to improve sustainable harvesting practices and offer long-term market and social benefits. Agreement on practical steps, through participatory visits and technical consultations, stakeholders reached a common understanding of the steps required to align cooperative practices with FairWild Standard, both in terms of environmental sustainability and gender-sensitive social inclusion. In Uzbekistan, assessments of 7 companies resulted in draft management plans and the creation of road maps for working with these companies, with 3 expressing strong interest in FairWild certification. One of these companies, Wonder Organics, has now completed FairWild certification following the initial assessment in November 2024. Meeting minutes for project meetings and email correspondence with MEG members are available to support this.</p>
<p>Outcome Indicator 0.3 By the end of Q8, stakeholders across the pilot landscapes have reached agreement on practical steps for improved collection practices of harvest groups</p>	<p>Assessments against the FairWild Standard, gap analyses, baseline assessments and action plans took place in Morocco and Uzbekistan (see section 3.2 for evidence).</p>

against FairWild criteria for both environmental sustainability and increased social benefits.	
Outcome Indicator 0.4 By the end of Q7, stakeholders across the pilot landscapes agree on practical steps to increase equity and benefits for women and any disadvantaged groups involved in wild collection in the two landscapes, e.g. higher participation of women in harvesting and processing activities, fairer wages.	In Morocco and Uzbekistan, stakeholders have reported positively on the potential of the WHIP framework to improve sustainable harvesting practices and offer long-term market and social benefits, including benefits to women and disadvantaged groups ((see section 3.2 for evidence).
Output 1 Existing FIP guidance and processes adapted to wild harvesting and draft comprehensive practical framework for WHIP developed	
Output indicator 1.1 By the end of Q2, members of multidisciplinary expert group (MEG) convened and started to adapt the FIP guidelines and FairWild standard.	Terms of Reference(ToR) for the MEG was drafted (SD3), experts identified and invited to form part of the group (SD4) and a kick-off meeting to discuss initial feedback on the draft WHIP concept and initial framework was convened (SD1 and SD5). Meeting minutes and attendance lists are available on request. The ToR for the research into FIPs and their relationship to wild plant harvesting was created and the project manager attended the Rethinking Value Chains Putting People & The Environment First conference, in October 2023, informing the research development (SD6). The literature review report was developed by the core project team and reviewed several times by the MEG and other key stakeholders such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), and Biodiversify (draft versions of the literature review and feedback from stakeholders are available upon request). The final literature review is provided as evidence (SD7). Further evidence provided in section 3.2.
Output indicator 1.2 By the end of Q3, a draft of a WHIP framework has been designed and reviewed via MEG workshops.	The core project team used the literature review to develop the first draft of the WHIP framework. Following further input from the MEG, it was summarised into a shorter WHIPs framework document which was used for consultation and an infographic was created to elucidate the WHIPs approach (SD8, SD15). The review process was iterative, with baseline feedback also then informing further revision of the framework through ongoing discussion and reflection with the MEG and partners in country. The core project team attended various events and field visits to inform the process (SD2, SD25). The final framework meeting was held in October 2024 (SD9). Meeting minutes and feedback from stakeholders are available on request. Further evidence provided in section 3.2.
Output 2. Pilots of the draft WHIP framework in landscapes in Morocco and Uzbekistan	
Output indicator 2.1. By end of Q4, stakeholder mapping and baseline assessment against FairWild standard completed and improvement areas identified for at least two landscapes. Final revision to take place in Q8 as additional stakeholders included.	Stakeholder mapping and baseline assessments have been completed in both Uzbekistan and Morocco (SD10, SD11, SD12, SD13). As part of this process, the project manager spent a week in the field in Morocco with MBLA accompanying them on initial meetings with landscape stakeholders, which included supporting stakeholder mapping. FairWild experts also visited both target sites in Uzbekistan to support the stakeholder mapping exercise. A stakeholder mapping workshop was held online in October 2024 to support project partners in developing stakeholder assessment (SD11). In August 2024, the baseline assessment was carried out in Morocco with the support of a consultant hosted by MBLA (SD12). The baseline assessment for Uzbekistan took place in November 2024 (SD13).

<p>Output indicator 2.2. By the end of Q7, feasibility assessments and draft action plans completed for the establishment of WHIPs in at least two landscapes (Uzbekistan, Morocco), following the draft framework.</p>	<p>As mentioned, the project manager spent a week in the field with MBLA, joining initial meetings with stakeholders across the pilot landscape in Morocco. These meetings served to introduce the FairWild Standard and certification process to potential WHIPs stakeholders and to conduct a preliminary assessment of cooperative operations (SD2). Several meetings were held with cooperative stakeholders and government representatives (12 in total), and a multi-cooperative meeting focused on identifying improvements for wild harvesting practices across the landscape was convened. In Uzbekistan, a separate stakeholder meeting was also held to gather local input on the WHIPs framework and review baseline assessment findings. The Liquorice roundtable meeting in February 2025 served as another opportunity to receive direct feedback from stakeholders. The core project team developed a summary document/action plan for both pilot landscapes It considers the future direction for a WHIP, feasibility, and who might be involved in both Uzbekistan and Morocco (Annex 2 of SD15). The summary document outlines the outcomes of the two pilot studies and the distinct challenges and opportunities for implementing WHIPs in each context. It includes information on the recommendations from the baseline assessments, summaries of feedback received from stakeholders that were consulted in each landscape and some options for a WHIP in the landscape.</p>
<p>Output indicator 2.3 By end of Q7, WHIP framework revised based on testing and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>Following the baseline assessments, stakeholder meetings and piloting in Morocco and Uzbekistan, the WHIP framework was revised and adapted accordingly (SD15), with final input from MEG (SD14). Draft versions of the framework and stakeholder feedback are available upon request.</p>
<p>Output indicator 2.4 By the end of Q9, at least three companies committed to support the ongoing implementation of WHIPs in the target landscapes.</p>	<p>In Morocco, more than 10 stakeholders, including local institutions (CAEDEL, ONCA), international partners (UNESCO, IECD), and cooperatives, reported positively on the potential of the WHIP framework to improve sustainable harvesting practices and offer long-term market and social benefits. Agreement on practical steps, through participatory visits and technical consultations, stakeholders reached a common understanding of the steps required to align cooperative practices with FairWild Standard, both in terms of environmental sustainability and gender-sensitive social inclusion. In Uzbekistan, assessments of 7 companies resulted in draft management plans and the creation of road maps for working with these companies, with 3 expressing strong interest in FairWild certification. Meeting minutes for project meetings and email correspondence with MEG members are available to support this.</p>
<p>Output indicator 2.5 By the end of Q9, at least 10 collector and harvester groups (at least 100 harvesters) engaged in the WHIP piloting process receive training and capacity development support to improve harvest and trade practices in line with the FairWild Standard.</p>	<p>In Morocco, three MBLA team members were trained on the FairWild standard including auditing principles and how to complete the management plan (SD19). The cooperatives selected were engaged through training, awareness sessions, and field evaluations on sustainable wild harvesting practices aligned with FairWild (SD19). Overall, 5 SMEs in Morocco (Essaouira-Agadir) participated in the pilot phase of the project. Each SME engaged in capacity-building sessions, including initial sustainability assessments of their landscapes and harvesting practices, as well as the co-development of WHIPS. In terms of harvesters, approximately 110 individual harvesters were involved across the five Moroccan SMEs. These harvesters, many of whom are women, participated in training workshops, field assessments, and feedback sessions.</p> <p>In Uzbekistan, assessments of 7 companies resulted in draft management plans and the creation of road maps for working with these companies, with 3 expressing strong interest in FairWild certification. Overall 30 harvesters were trained in Uzbekistan. Stakeholders in Uzbekistan were also trained in FairWild standards, and continued to be provided through the aligned GIZ project "Ecologically Oriented Regional Development in the Aral Sea Region" (ECO-</p>

	ARAL). One company in Uzbekistan, Wonder Organics, has now completed FairWild certification following the initial assessment in November 2024.
Output 3. Global stakeholders have access to the WHIP framework and guidance for its application.	
Output indicator 3.1 Internal project Influence Plan in place by end of Q3, aligned to the stakeholder mapping process for pilots, while also considering stakeholders with interest in the WHIP approach beyond the pilot landscapes.	A stakeholder and influence map were developed for the overarching project goal which includes national level stakeholders' analysis for each landscape, including the stakeholder mapping exercise (see Output 2.1) (SD10, SD11, SD20, SD21).
Output indicator 3.2 By end of Q8, multi-stakeholder guidance/principles on WHIPs and accompanying implementation tools developed and published.	The WHIP framework was further revised in consultations with the core project team and the broader range of stakeholders included in the MEG (SD14, SD15). As part of the WHIP framework, a summary document (Annex 2 of SD15), which aimed to evaluate the concept and explain it to a wider audience, was developed. It considers the future direction for a WHIP, feasibility, and who might be involved in both Uzbekistan and Morocco (SD15). Additionally, the core project team also developed a short two-pager for the WHIPS framework for public distribution to stakeholders (SD28).
Output indicator 3.3 By end of Q9, framework and guidance disseminated to at least 100 businesses, CSOs, funding agencies, and government bodies involved in natural resource management, both within the two trial landscapes and more broadly in wild-harvest supply chains, and feedback collected.	Throughout the duration of the project, the core project team promoted the WHIPs concept and framework at various trade shows and events globally, amounting to more than 100 different stakeholders (SD16, SD17, SD18 – further evidence provided in section 3.2). For example, more than ten stakeholders, including local institutions (CAEDEL, ONCA), international partners (UNESCO, IECD), and cooperatives, reported positively on the potential of the WHIP framework to improve sustainable harvesting practices and offer long-term market and social benefits in Morocco. Furthermore, at tradeshow like in-cosmetics Global, FairWild continued the dialogue with argan producers and processors, which may lead to FairWild-certified argan. The Liquorice Round Table held at BIOFACH in February 2025 was a key milestone, facilitating direct engagement with industry leaders and raising awareness about the importance of sustainable practices in liquorice production.
Output indicator 3.4 By end of Q9, potential for further development of WHIPs scoped and next steps established, including creation of an online platform and mechanism for supporting WHIPs.	During the final stages of the project, FairWild pursued a research consultancy around argan, using the findings and recommendations from the WHIPs framework and summary document to inform an engagement strategy for the argan sector. In addition, and as mentioned, local cooperatives in Morocco expressed interest in the uptake of FairWild Standard and the WHIP concept. The Liquorice Round Table held at BIOFACH in February 2025 was also a key milestone, facilitating direct engagement with industry leaders and raising awareness about the importance of sustainable practices in liquorice production. To continue promotional efforts into the future, a short two-pager for the WHIPS framework for public distribution to stakeholders has been produced as a tool to further promote the WHIPs concept in the sector (SD28).

Annex 2 Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Wild plant harvesters in key landscapes for biodiversity benefit from increased visibility as they work towards certification and from industry and other stakeholder commitments to support improvements to sustainable sourcing.			
Outcome: The conceptual framework for “wild harvest improvement projects” is in place, with stakeholder buy-in, focusing on best-practices for enabling certification and sustainable use of wild plants in multi-user landscapes.	0.1 By end of Q8, the WHIP framework has been developed and tested in at least two landscapes.	0.1 Project reports; MEG meeting minutes; pilot landscape meeting minutes and feedback reports; web updates.	Although FIPs typically only address sustainability criteria in line with the MSC standard, the project will be able to adapt the approach for WHIPs to cover both sustainability and social criteria, in line with the FairWild standard. Although the nature of sustainability and social issues can be different, the multi-stakeholder, participatory approach of FIPs should be sufficiently adaptable. Additionally, there are some examples of FIPs that address both, and we are leveraging partners' extensive experience working directly with harvesters towards meeting the FairWild standard.
	0.2 By the end of Q8, at least ten organisations (government, private sector, civil society) have reported positively on the potential of the framework to improve harvesting practices, to leverage resources and commitments, and mitigate the risk in wild plants supply chains.	0.2 Written records from authorities, private sector partners and users of framework; survey of stakeholders	The two-year time frame will be too short to generate measurable outcomes for the populations of wild plants, or for wellbeing benefits (e.g. raised incomes) for the harvesters.
	0.3 By the end of Q8, stakeholders across the pilot landscapes have reached agreement on practical steps for improved collection practices of harvest groups against FairWild criteria for both environmental sustainability and increased social benefits.	0.3, 0.4 Gap analysis and draft action plans/recommendations documents for each pilot landscape, aligned to the preliminary WHIP framework.	Certification standards such as FairWild represent best-practice in wild plant harvesting and will result in benefits to harvesters. TRAFFIC and FairWild have tested this assumption through years of on-the-ground work with partners and harvesters.

	0.4 By the end of Q7, stakeholders across the pilot landscapes agree on practical steps to increase equity and benefits for women and any disadvantaged groups involved in wild collection in the two landscapes, e.g. higher participation of women in harvesting and processing activities, fairer wages.		
Output 1 Existing FIP guidance and processes adapted to wild harvesting and draft comprehensive practical framework for WHIP developed	1.1 By the end of Q2, members of multidisciplinary expert group (MEG) convened and started to adapt the FIP guidelines and FairWild standard. 1.2 By the end of Q3, a draft of a WHIP framework has been designed and reviewed via MEG workshops.	1.1 Meeting minutes and attendance lists 1.2 Literature review report; records of public comments; existence of draft framework	Completing the draft WHIP by the end of Q2 will be possible because existing comprehensive guidance is already available for the fisheries sector, which can be readily adapted based on the extensive sector-specific knowledge and experience available in the group, including specific experience with applying the FairWild standard.
Output 2 Pilots of the draft WHIP framework in landscapes in Morocco and Uzbekistan	2.1 By end of Q4, stakeholder mapping and baseline assessment against FairWild standard completed and improvement areas identified for at least two landscapes. Final revision to take place in Q8 as additional stakeholders included.	2.1 Stakeholder mapping diagram, baseline assessment reports	Risk management will need to be a key part of pilots, to test ways to improve local benefits from progress towards certification, without increasing risks of over-exploitation of wild plants.
	2.2 By the end of Q7, feasibility assessments and draft action plans completed for the establishment of WHIPs in at least two landscapes (Uzbekistan, Morocco), following the draft framework.	2.2 Draft action plans (ideas document), revisions to baseline assessment reports	Harvester communities will be willing to engage with the WHIPs approach, including any socio-cultural modifications this might entail, e.g. sharing harvesting data, potentially with other harvester groups. Any issues surrounding this assumption should be possible to address through the WHIP multi-stakeholder approach and open dialogue.

	2.3 By end of Q7, WHIP framework revised based on testing and stakeholder feedback.	2.3 Stakeholder feedback via surveys/meeting minutes, revised version of framework available	Relevant stakeholders will see value in the WHIPs approach and be willing to test it. We think this is a reasonable assumption based on discussions in-country and with industry stakeholders.
	2.4 By the end of Q9, at least three companies committed to support the ongoing implementation of WHIPs in the target landscapes.	2.4 Records of business commitments (e.g. emails, meeting minutes)	
	2.5 By the end of Q9, at least 10 collector and harvester groups (at least 100 harvesters) engaged in the WHIP piloting process receive training and capacity development support to improve harvest and trade practices in line with the FairWild Standard.	2.5 Training attendance lists, copy of training materials	
Output 3 Global stakeholders have access to the WHIP framework and guidance for its application.	3.1 Internal project Influence Plan in place by end of Q3, aligned to the stakeholder mapping process for pilots, while also considering stakeholders with interest in the WHIP approach beyond the pilot landscapes.	3.1 Copy of Influence Plan	Practitioners and policy makers are interested in the WHIP framework and willing to engage in further testing and providing feedback. We expect this assumption to hold true based on our ongoing discussions with key policy makers and projects on wild harvesting.
	3.2 By end of Q8, multi-stakeholder guidance/principles on WHIPs and accompanying implementation tools developed and published.	3.2 Guidance available on the project web page	
	3.3 By end of Q9, framework and guidance disseminated to at least 100 businesses, CSOs, funding agencies, and government bodies involved in natural resource management, both within the two trial landscapes and more broadly in wild-harvest supply chains, and feedback collected.	3.3 Dissemination and feedback records	
	3.4 By end of Q9, potential for further development of WHIPs scoped and next steps established, including	3.4 Scoping report; written records from stakeholders on their future engagement; meeting minutes	

	creation of an online platform and mechanism for supporting WHIPs.		
<p>Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)</p> <p>1.1 Identify relevant experts on wild harvesting, sustainability standards, and landscape management from CSOs, local governments, and the private sector and invite them to join the Multidisciplinary Expert Group (MEG).</p> <p>1.2 Literature review on FIP best-practice guides, existing improvement projects, local contexts of wild harvesting.</p> <p>1.3 Analysis and synthesis of FairWild, MSC, and FIP frameworks to produce draft WHIP framework.</p> <p>1.4 Invite and collect public comment on the draft framework by posting on the TRAFFIC website and sharing via social media and at relevant meetings and events (e.g. Biofach trade fair).</p> <p>1.5 Conduct a review workshop with MEG and finalise the draft framework, for further testing in the pilot landscapes.</p> <p>2.1 Conduct stakeholder mapping exercise within the two pilot landscapes to shape participation in the trial WHIPs.</p> <p>2.2 Work with third-party consultants to conduct the baseline assessment of the two pilot landscapes against the FairWild Standard.</p> <p>2.3 Meet with relevant stakeholders within each pilot landscape to gather feedback on WHIP framework, review findings of the baseline assessment, and establish how to address issues and needs identified.</p> <p>2.4 Revision of draft WHIP framework according to the stakeholder meetings and pilot landscape findings.</p> <p>2.5 Promotion of WHIP concept to industry actors sourcing from the landscapes to secure commitment to further implementation (e.g. through one-to-one meetings, webinars, trade fairs, etc).</p> <p>2.6 Capacity-building with stakeholders (e.g. harvester communities, government officials) to enable working with the FairWild Standard, with needs established through Activity 2.3.</p> <p>3.1 Create and execute an Influence Plan, including stakeholder analysis, key messaging, and identification of dissemination opportunities.</p> <p>3.2 Produce the final WHIP framework, alongside a multi-stakeholder guidance document, for further testing and development beyond the close of the project.</p> <p>3.3 With input from MEG and the pilot landscapes stakeholders, conduct a scoping exercise and produce a report establishing how the WHIP approach can be further developed beyond the end of the project.</p> <p>3.4 Disseminate the framework, guidance, and scoping report to stakeholders identified in the Influence Plan for further action, e.g. local governments, businesses, CSOs, and funding agencies, including through TRAFFIC and FairWild industry engagement programmes (e.g. BioFach event).</p>			

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Total achieved	Total planned
DI-A01	By the end of Q8, 100 harvesters from community forest user groups have completed structured and relevant training to improve harvest and trade practices in line with the FairWild Standard	People	Men & Women	0	140	140	100
DI-A03 -	By the end of Q8, at least 10 local/national collector and harvester organisations have improved capability and capacity for harvest and trade practices in line with the FairWild Standard, as a result of the project	Organisations	Number	0	12	12	10
DI-B04 -	By the end of Q8, a new sustainable livelihoods management plan (WHIPS framework) based on project findings is available and endorsed by businesses, CSOs, funding agencies, and government bodies involved in natural resource management, both within the two trial landscapes and more broadly in wild-harvest supply chains	Management plan	Number	0	1	1	1
DI-D01 -	By the end of Q8, a measurable number of hectares of habitat is under sustainable management practices according to the WHIPS framework.	Ha of habitat under sustainable management	Number	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)
Literature Review / Research Document	Report	Vicki Crook, Cara Flowers, Bryony Morgan, Deborah Vorhies	Female	British	TRAFFIC	TRAFFIC
WHIPS framework	Report	TRAFFIC, FairWild, MBLA, GDF and Biodiversify	Female	British	TRAFFIC	TRAFFIC
Short promotional document on WHIPS framework	Promotional report	TRAFFIC	Female	British	TRAFFIC	TRAFFIC

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	X
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	X
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option, is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	N/A
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 14)?	X
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	X
Have you provided an updated risk register? If you have an existing risk register you should provide an updated version alongside your report. If your project was funded prior to this being a requirement, you are encouraged to develop a risk register.	X
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors?	X
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	X
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	