

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Plant Conservation Committee



CO-CHAIR

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NUMBER OF MEMBERS

26

Mission statement

The IUCN SSC Plant Conservation Committee (PCC) leads IUCN's efforts in stemming the loss of global plant diversity through its wide-ranging network of plant conservationists. The PCC is responsible for advising and assisting on the overall prioritisation and programme oversight within the SSC to deliver on its plant conservation responsibilities. The PCC works to support and facilitate the activities of the SSC Chair, the IUCN Global Species Programme, and the expert volunteer network of Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities, Task Forces and others, providing overall strategic guidance and direction in accordance with the mandate of the SSC.

Projected impact 2021–2025

Promote the inclusion of plant related information, skills and tools to support global conservation planning and actions, such as the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, Key Biodiversity Areas, restoration initiatives and sustainable use. Support the SSC plant specialist groups in evaluating the extinction risk of key plant groups, such as trees and Crop Wild Relatives, prioritising which species are in most need of emergency recovery work, and producing more effective conservation plans and actions for plant species.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-004 Promote inclusion of all plant data available in the IUCN Red List for definition of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites.

T-006 Consider reformulation of KBAs to include Crop Wild Relative (CWR) species.

T-007 Work with regional Specialist Groups to get them involved with the KBAs process at national level, making sure plant species are included in that process and can contribute to spatial strategic planning for conservation at a larger scale.

T-016 Develop discussion paper on use and trade of wild plants for different sectors and conservation approaches/intervention types (e.g. commercial uses for ornamental/horticulture, medicine, food and beverages/cosmetic, timber, subsistence uses).

T-020 Support the completion of assessments on key groups: Global Trees, Global Priority CWR, Medicinal and aromatics.

T-021 Ensure national endemics are represented in the Red List.

T-023 Identify groups of plants to be assessed regularly and included on the Red List Index and other global indicators.

PLAN

T-001 Promote the inclusion of more plant information on the Post-2020 Framework and other multilateral environmental agreements.

T-012 Use Kew Declaration to create an emergency motion for the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

T-018 Collate/contribute plants use/trade inputs to CITES, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Food and Agriculture Organization, including information on illegal trade.

T-025 Produce a policy brief on CWR and their role in adaptation to climate change and consider turning this into a resolution for the next IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC).

ACT

T-002 Encourage each plant Specialist Group to work on recovery actions ensuring that the proportion of plant groups engaged in recovery action work increases by the end of the quadrennium, with the objective to ensure all Specialist Groups are actively engaged in this work in the next quadrennium.

T-003 Develop a methodology to prioritise which species are in most need of emergency recovery and which actions are needed and share this with all plant groups.



Reintroduction of *Parakmeria omeiensis*
(Magnoliaceae)
Photo: Hai Ren

NETWORK

T-008 Continue to develop strategic partnerships to influence restoration policy and practice (e.g. IUCN Bonn Challenge Secretariat, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, etc.), including identifying regional focal points from plant Specialist Groups.

T-009 Create a PCC advisory group on ecological restoration, including regional focal points from plant Specialist Groups and those we want to influence (IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, IUCN Conservation Translocation Specialist Group, IUCN Bonn Challenge Secretariat).

T-015 Create a Plant Use Group, possibly within the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (SULi), involving members from PCC, Specialist Groups and partner organisations like TRAFFIC and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), and/or an advisory group within the PCC.

T-022 Create new groups to focus on regions with gaps in the Red List: Mesoamerica/Mexico, South America (Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia), Southeast Asia, Australia.

T-026 Collate information about which Specialist Groups are working with CWR and in what aspects and make the link between the Specialist Groups and the Crop Wild Relative Specialist Group (CWRSRG) for Red Listing and other activities concerning conservation planning, ex situ and in situ conservation implementation.

T-027 Organise a series of thematic webinars and virtual meetings with the PCC, all the plant Specialist Groups and cross-thematic groups to share experiences and catalyse collaborations for projects on the species conservation cycle (assess-plan-act).

T-028 Work with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group to organise a training workshop for the plant Specialist Groups on conservation planning and promote the development of conservation plans to implement impactful conservation actions.

T-005 Encourage regional Specialist Groups to identify potential species of conservation concern (threatened, restricted range, CWR and others of socioeconomic importance) that aren't already covered by protected areas, ensure their inclusion in protected areas expansion work and promote their active conservation.

T-010 Support Specialist Groups to be involved with Botanic Gardens Conservation International's five-year strategic plan target on work with the Ecological Restoration Alliance.

T-013 Contribute to developing an international standard specific to biodiversity, combining existing guidelines and best

practices to promote and support the use of native plants and local botanical expertise in afforestation, reforestation and restoration, and the sustainable use of non-native trees.

T-014 Quantify, coordinate and promote the role of the IUCN SSC Plant Specialist Groups and botanic gardens in conserving socio-economically important species, reducing the threat of over-exploitation to plants, and sustainable management of plants for improved livelihoods in support of the Sustainable Development Goal.

T-019 Inform donor priorities on reducing illicit trade in plant resources and enabling sustainable and legal use and trade.

Vicia bithynica (L.) L., a Tertiary wild relative of faba beans, in Mafra, Portugal
Photo: Joana Magos Brehm



COMMUNICATE

T-011 Gather species data, case studies and stories from plant Specialist Groups to promote during the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

T-017 Contribute to the 'wild plants are our business' public campaign (with/via botanic gardens, private sector), increasing the awareness of the use of wild plants in products, opportunities and risks, and aiming at wider market transformation.

T-024 Help raise the profile of CWR and their value within IUCN, the Specialist Groups and globally. Disseminate available tools and guidelines on CWR conservation planning and management developed by the CWRSG among the other Specialist Groups, and consider including more case studies from different regional experiences.

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Research activities

T-006 (KSR 6)

Number of new Key Biodiversity Areas confirmed in the World Database of KBAs (WDKBA): 0

Result description: A meeting between members of the PCC (Domitilla Raimondo, Cátia Canteiro, Joana Magos Brehm), the CWRSG (Nigel Maxted and Joana Magos Brehm), the KBA Secretariat (Andy Plumptre) and the KBA Technical Working Group (Penny Langhammer and Olivia Crowe) was held in September 2021 to discuss the possibilities of reformulating the KBAs to include CWR diversity. It was agreed that it would be interesting to understand how the existing KBAs cover CWR diversity. With this in mind, a student from the University of Birmingham (UK) initiated

a project, under the supervision of Nigel Maxted and Joana Magos Brehm, which aims at: (i) evaluating the overlap between the distribution of priority CWR, the most closely related CWR to crops and the KBAs; (ii) identifying KBAs for threatened/narrowly distributed CWR; (iii) assessing whether CWR hotspots and priority sites for in situ conservation overlap with existing KBAs and/or meet KBA criteria. These analyses are expected to be carried out for European and southern African CWR and are expected to be finalised by April 2022.

T-006 (KSR 6)

Number of Key Biodiversity Areas in the World Database of KBAs (WDKBA) updated after reassessment for species: 0

Result description: Same result reported for previous indicator.

T-016 (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 0

Result description: Initial conversations took place on the development of the discussion paper, with the focus on trade in timber, as well as the parallel efforts led by TRAFFIC and the IUCN Medicinal Plant Specialist Group on the trade in wild plant products as ingredients.

PLAN

Policy

T-001 (KSR 9)

Number of policies where SSC members provided technical input: 1

Result description: The Plant Conservation Committee contributed to drafting targets and indicators for the Post-2020 Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. Once

endorsed by parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity this will be the third iteration of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. Unlike the previous two versions which were stand-alone strategies, this time plant targets have been formulated to nest within the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The Post-2020 Global Strategy for Plant Conservation will be presented at the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) meeting scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2022.

T-012 (KSR 9)

Emergency motion submitted: achieved

Result description: An emergency motion on reforestation entitled 'Planting the right tree in the right place for the right purpose' was submitted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille. The motion was submitted by Noé as the proponent organisation, and it was co-sponsored by 28 additional organisations. Although the Resolutions Committee recognised the importance of the motion and the problem of tree planting using non-native species, the motion was not accepted since it was not considered a new issue and was already addressed in the IUCN Programme 2021–2024. However, the Plant Conservation Committee will be looking at ways to continue to address this issue and promote the planting of native tree species.

T-018 (KSR 9)

Number of contributions by SSC groups to CITES or CMS for listing or uplisting species: 2

Result description: Contribution was provided to the draft Global Strategy for Plant Conservation to 2030, alongside the Global Biodiversity Framework and specific Targets on use and trade in wild species.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-003 (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 0

Result description: The Global Tree Portal tracker (<https://www.bgci.org/resources/bgci-databases/globaltree-portal/>) was developed and launched to track ex situ and in situ conservation action for tree species in real time, and which can be used to identify gaps in conservation effort. These data will be used to alert plant conservation practitioners to the highest risk threatened species and to 'gap' species which are not currently subject to species recovery actions at all.

T-013 (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 0

Result description: The Global Biodiversity Standard development was announced and website launched at the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) by BGCI, PCC, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), TRAFFIC, Ecosia, Plan Vivo and 1t.org (<https://www.biodiversitystandard.org/>). A project proposal was submitted to the UK Government by partners and country-based botanical institutions to (a) develop and test the Global Biodiversity Standard methodology; (b) build country level hubs of expertise able to carry out biodiversity assessments and mentoring; (c) develop a cost-effective business model for the Global Biodiversity Standard; and (d) work with policymakers and financiers of tree planting and restoration to mandate or require site-based biodiversity assessments.

T-014 (KSR 11)

Number of projects providing evidence that use is sustainable per taxonomic group and region: 0

Result description: Associated with the consolidation of the Plant Use Group, it is planned that the survey of botanic gardens and plant Specialist Groups on their existing use/trade activities will be rolled out in 2022, led by BGCI (focus on botanic gardens), with the support from PCC and SULi (focus on the SSC network). It is anticipated that the outcomes of the survey and discussion on follow-up can be scheduled in June–July 2022.

T-010 (KSR 10)

Number of groups involved with BGCI's five-year strategic plan: 0

Result description: During 2021, consultations were held with members of the Ecological Restoration Alliance of Botanic Gardens (ERA) and a strategy for the next five years developed. This will be circulated to plant Specialist Groups in early 2022 with suggestions on how Specialist Groups can be involved in delivering the targets.

NETWORK

Membership

T-009 (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 0

Result description: A request for restoration focal points from plant Specialist Groups was circulated. A list of other people from within IUCN to involve in the restoration group has also been developed. A concept note for the restoration group has been drafted which is currently in final review. A request to join the group will be sent out in early 2022.

T-009 (KSR 2)

Member expertise distribution: ongoing

Result description: Same result reported for previous indicator.

T-015 (KSR 3)

Number of SSC members recruited: 0

Result description: The Plant Conservation Committee advanced the discussion with IUCN SULi on the establishment of the Plant Use Group, which will be set up as a group within SULi, benefiting from the existing infrastructure and building on the initial membership of SULi. It is anticipated that the Plant Use Group will be announced in SULi in January 2022, with the invitations to plant Specialist Groups to participate sent out between February and March 2022. In addition to the overall discussion about the Plant Use Group, a subset of PCC and other interested SSC members, as well as the TRAFFIC timber trade expert, participated in a discussion about the utility and necessity of formulating a set of priority objectives surrounding trade in timber. The decision was made to create a temporary task team, with follow-up anticipated in January 2022.

T-022 (KSR 2)

Number of new SSC groups established: 0

Result description: Discussions were initiated with Bolivian botanists to set up a Bolivian Plant Specialist Group or Stand-alone Red List Authority.

Synergy

T-008 (KSR 3)

IUCN bodies with which the SSC group collaborates to advance targets: 2

Result description: BGCI and other PCC members have been actively developing strategic partnerships for restoration during 2021, promoting the important skills and knowledge of plant Specialist Groups. This includes joint funding applications and strengthened partnerships with SER (who are a UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration partner) and 1t.org.

T-008 (KSR 3)

Non-IUCN bodies with which the SSC group collaborates to advance targets: 2

Result description: Same result reported for previous indicator.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-017 (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 0

Result description: The collaboration is being developed around the 'wild plants are our business' and 'we use wild' campaigns, planned for 2022, to raise the awareness of risks and opportunities associated with the trade in wild plant ingredients, through the concerted efforts of botanic gardens and the plant conservation community at large. The link will also be made to the planned activities by IUCN SULi to raise the profile of sustainable wild use among the public.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 28

Geographic regions: 28 Global

Actions during 2021:

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 3 (KSR 9)

Act: 4 (KSR 10, 11)

Network: 6 (KSR 2, 3)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

