

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator

Action number: CA18201

STSM title: Local ecological knowledge on wild plant applications across the local communities in Iceland

STSM start and end date: 24/09/2021 to 08/10/2021

Grantee name: BAIBA PRUSE

PURPOSE OF THE STSM:

(max.200 words)

The STSM was aimed to explore the human dimension of plant conservation with particular focus on local ecological knowledge (LEK) among communities in Iceland. The Host Institution for the STSM was Icelandic Institute of Natural History under the supervision of Rannveig Thoroddsen. Besides the interest of LEK in Iceland also public engagement initiatives in nature conservation were of great interest for the applicant to explore while on the mission.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSMS

(max.500 words)

The STSM was divided in three main parts:

- *consultation with the Host Institution, specifically, with Rannveig Thoroddsen;*
- *scheduling meetings with the knowledge keepers across Iceland;*
- *actual field work by visiting the identified experts.*

The consultation with Rannveig Thoroddsen provided the knowledge base of the flora of Iceland – particularly the overview (with distribution maps) of the critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, near threatened and protected plant taxa. In respect to landscape change via archive materials the lecture of Hreinn Óskarsson was also introduced and viewed via youtube channel.

The meetings with various experts of the field in LEK and practitioners were pre-arranged prior the STSM and during the first days of the mission in order to be able to reach the intended target group within the given time. Preliminary list of guiding points for the semi-structured interviews were set prior the field trip.

In order to gain more insights of LEK in Iceland various studies were consulted e.g. Edible wild plant use in the Faroe Islands and Iceland (2012) including the option to reach out to the authors, i.g. Ingvar Svanberg and Sigurður Ægisson.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED

(max.500 words)

With the help from Slow Food Network as well as following the suggestions from the researchers at University of Gastronomic Science (Italy) several experts were approached on the subject of interest. As part of the field work, Svavar Halldorsson, a member of Slow Food Network, was interviewed where besides the overview of the current Slow Food Movement he also introduced to a specific microalgae production site which holds the purpose to make food supplement (Picture 1). Mr Halldorsson introduced also the work of

chef in Iceland who uses wild plants in his menu i.e. Gísli Matthías Auðunsson. Unfortunately, the timing did not allow to approach the named chef in person but a set of email exchange was done.

The field work brought closer to meeting Gudrun Bjarnadóttir who is doing plant based sheep wool colouring (Picture 2). The discussion was linked towards the use of non-synthetic materials while colouring the wool and the various ways she establishes educational workshops/materials to transmit the knowledge she holds. Meanwhile she also remembered the change in Selfoss area in respect to appearance of trees by noting that the following saying is not anymore valid: “If you get lost in forest in Iceland - stand up”. In respect of natural resource uses, the visit at Akurery brought an unexpected meeting with a fur tanner whoe uses natural products including Salix species during the tanning process (Picture 3).

Another key informant on LEK was Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir who introduce her recent work. She with her husband also owns a farm and invited to see the nearby garden.

The member of Slow Food Reykjavik introduced Cittaslow movement and the contact person – Greata Mjoll Samueldottir. While passing by Djupivogur several stops were made to understand the philosophy behind the Cittaslow as one of the core aspects are linked with the authenticity of the products.

While accompanying STSM applicant Kaspars Goba to the farm in Westfjords Region the cattle farmer recalled a certain remark in respect to soil and how various soil types keep the moisture. Additionally, the researcher at the Agricultural University of Iceland who himself is a sheep farmer noted the change in the distribution of vegetation across the hills in comparion to 20 years time.

The work of Eydis Mary Jonssdottir was introduced by several reference points as she is engaged in sea weed foraging practice. Fortunately it was an option to contact her via Messenger and gain more details about her work (e.g. section in Icelandic Times Issue 44, 2021).

As to the public engagement, unfortunately the planned meeting did not happen with Sigrún María from the municipality of Kópavogur who works on citizen democracy. However, a successful email exchange took place and the contact has been established.



Picture 1. Visit at Algalif.



Picture 2. At the studio of Ms Bjarnadóttir.



Picture 3. At the fur tanning studio.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)

(max.500 words)

The contacts established during the STSM are of great value for future collaborations especially in respect to future Post-Doc/research opportunities in Iceland and for Conserveplants WG4. Furthermore, several additional contacts were provided which were not approached this time. Thanks to the Host institution - some of the linking paths were provided with the Botanical Garden in Reykjavik - Björk Þorleifsdóttir the head of events in the garden. Geislar Gautavík – expert on small food producers in Iceland as well as Dominique Plédel Jónsson – a previous leader of Slow Food Network in Iceland - are some of the additional contacts which were received during the mission and provides ground for developing more insights on LEK. Also the work of Auður I. Ottesen was introduced as a good source of information as she is herself involved in foraging/gardening activities via journalism.

Together with the other STSM applicant Kaspars Goba we also had the opportunity to introduce our missions to the President of Iceland and hear his views and future vision for rural development.

As discussed with CEMUS [student-initiated, transdisciplinary centre at Uppsala University and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences] there is an interest for a short pod-cast session in respect to the mission.