

## FairWild Standard v3.0: concept note for revising the Standard

Wild plant biodiversity is under increasing pressure, from land conversion and climate change as well as unsustainable direct harvesting for use as ingredients. This has a direct impact on those who rely on wild plant trade: frequently some of the poorest and most marginalised people in society – those in rural communities who lack formalised land rights and other income generating opportunities. Inequity in global value chains can also result in relatively little of the product value being retained by those that harvest them.

Voluntary standards for the sustainable harvesting of such plants can address these problems along the entire value chain by:

- a) Changing the lives of harvesters and collectors on the ground, both economically and socially, and building resilience in those communities and their livelihoods to withstand climate-related and other environmental, social or political shocks;
- b) Effecting conservation of key species;
- c) Enhancing landscape conservation and climate outcomes;
- d) Improving sustainability practice throughout supply chains, through engagement with producers and retailers; and
- e) Encouraging more sustainable choices by consumers.

The FairWild Standard and certification scheme is a proven tool to support communities and rural producers to conserve biodiversity and manage their natural resources sustainably. It is unique in its sole focus on wild harvested products and in recognising the relationships that collector communities have with the species and landscapes within which they live and work, while often having vulnerable and precarious economic situations.

The Standard links sustainability criteria for the target resources to the wider landscape, and includes social and fair-trade requirements, building in positive economic incentives for communities and rural producers and providing a framework by which buyers can commit to support their suppliers. It is a tested system and has successfully reached market, with a wide pool of companies engaged and interested in FairWild.

### Concept

At the core of FairWild's work is the [FairWild Standard](#). The current version of the FairWild Standard (v2.0) has been in place since 2010. While ground-breaking at the time, the global sustainability agenda has continued to develop over the intervening years, and the Standard and associated implementation tools are now in need of review to enhance the effectiveness of the Standard and increase its impact by enabling wider implementation.

### Goal

The goal of the project is, in the first instance, to contribute to the achievement of SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), in relation to wild-harvested plant ingredients. We will achieve this by contributing to enhanced sustainability in value chains through: raising awareness with consumers; revision of the existing Standard to enhance its applicability, accessibility and relevance in current conditions; and engagement in significant value chains with major companies. In this way, we aim to engender systemic change and also to contribute directly to other SDGs, including 1, 5, 8, 14, 15 and 17<sup>1</sup>.

### Objectives

1. **Modernise the FairWild Standard:** Explicitly place the Standard in the context of international policy and best practice, including the Sustainable Development Goals, Nagoya Protocol, CITES, ILO Labour Conventions, ETI base code and others.
2. **Accessibility and useability:** Key guidance will be incorporated into the main standard document, and increase accessibility by the use of a range of media targeted to the needs of key stakeholder

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<sup>1</sup> SDG 1: No poverty; SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth, SDG 14: Life below water, SDG 15: Life on land, SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

groups (such as online training, short videos, etc.). Plain and accessible language will be used throughout; duplication and any non-essential detail will be avoided. Guidance will be made widely available by translating into languages other than English. In addition, the audit process will be streamlined and made more cost effective.

3. **Balance rigour, proportionality and risk:** The revision process will draw in best practice in embedding risk-based approaches within standards and auditing practices – balancing the need to ensure rigour of implementation with the ability to streamline processes in lower risk scenarios.
4. **Increase clarity in the chain of custody and assurance approach:** Currently, the FairWild Standard is applied via audit and certification of the “collection operation” – usually the first legal entity in the supply chain – with entities upstream registering as FairWild traders. However, as certification is increasingly applied to supply chains with multiple actors prior to export, it is timely to re-confirm what scope of operations should be encompassed in third party audits against the Standard.
5. **Expanding scope and simplifying application of the standard in different landscape contexts:** The FairWild Standard is applicable to “ingredients of herbal drugs and other botanical products originating from wild collection...collected from natural habitats”. However, the concept of “natural habitats” has evolved over recent years, with concepts such as rewilding coming to the fore in sustainability approaches. The applicability of the FairWild Standard to these concepts needs to be evaluated, and the scope adjusted accordingly.
6. **Provide modular approach for additional product types:** While the FairWild Standard v2.0 considers plants, fungi and lichen to be within the scope of application, the current implementation documents (e.g. the FairWild Performance Indicators, Risk Analysis matrix, etc.) are targeted at plant species and biological characteristics. To increase accessibility, the Standard will be simplified into a modular approach targeted at different product types, including fungi and seaweed, as well as add-on certifications (such as organic).

## Activities

The potential for impact of the FairWild Standard will be unlocked by:

- Updating and improving the FairWild Standard in line with the objectives above, following best practice guidance from ISEAL on stakeholder engagement and other procedural aspects.
- Training and working directly with operator communities and those that buy from them, through training courses and e-learning. This will ensure conservation outcomes on the ground and the economic/social well-being of those communities. Activities will be partly supported by the FairWild Operator Support Fund.
- Working with producers and larger actors in the value chain to create linkages and build scale of certified collection, through webinars, workshops and building partnerships.
- Provide publicity materials and engage in a social media strategy to grow awareness of need to require certified wild harvested ingredients.

In order to achieve this, we will leverage partnerships with other engaged actors such as TRAFFIC, IUCN MSPG, ISEAL, conservation NGOs, FFL, etc., as well as other standard setting and certification bodies. The revision will be carried out in line with the [FairWild Standard Revision and Development Procedure](#), v1/2019.

**For more information and to support this work, contact:**

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