



The FairWild Standard in practice: certification and more

The increasing demand for natural products in the sectors of food, cosmetics, “wellness” and medicinal ingredients poses major ecological and social challenges. High pressure on threatened and potentially vulnerable plants can endanger local ecosystems and the livelihoods of collectors. In response to these concerns, the FairWild Foundation promotes sustainable, fair and value-added management, including supply chain development, of wild-collected natural ingredients and products thereof.

The FairWild Standard provides guidance on best-practice harvesting and trading of wild-harvested plant (and similar) resources in eleven key areas:

- Maintaining wild plant resources
- Preventing negative environmental impacts
- Complying with laws, regulations, and agreements
- Respecting customary rights and benefit-sharing
- Promoting fair contractual relationships between operators and collectors
- Limiting participation of children in wild-collection activities
- Ensuring benefits for collectors and their communities
- Ensuring fair working conditions for all workers of FairWild collection operations
- Applying responsible management practices
- Applying responsible business practices
- Promoting buyer commitment.

The FairWild Standard forms the basis of a third-party audited **certification scheme**. The Principles and Criteria of the Standard have also proved to be instrumental for the development of **sustainable community management** of wild plant resources, **adoption of sustainability principles by the private sector**, and the implementation of **national resource management systems** and **international conventions**.

FairWild Certification

FairWild Certification means that buyers can know they are supporting fair trading—the products are legally and sustainably sourced, and the benefits are felt by all those involved, right down to the local communities harvesting the wild plants. For a product to be sold as FairWild Certified, all those involved in the national or international supply need to be assessed, from collectors through to traders and exporters in the country of origin.

Certification is based on resource assessment; management plans; sustainable collecting practices; cost calculation along the supply chain; traceability of goods and finances; and documented fair trading practices. In 2010, producer organisations in nine different countries achieved FairWild certification (46 species in total).

FairWild in communities

FairWild has been successfully piloted with communities in a number of countries. For example, in India, where the establishment of community-based management structures for the use of natural resources is well advanced, the FairWild Standard has been trialled with communities in two States: Uttarakhand and Karnataka. In Brazil, the FairWild implementation project with AVIVE (*Associação Vida Verde da Amazônia*) focused on the sustainable harvest of native medicinal and aromatic plant species to improve livelihoods and create incentives for habitat conservation.

FairWild informing national legislation

Governments can use the FairWild Standard as a model for the development of national laws and other regulations governing fair trade practices, the conservation of biodiversity and the management of plant collection from the wild. While the entire Standard needs to be implemented in order to achieve FairWild Certification, it is possible to focus only on specific parts of the Standard to help guide national or regional legislative and policy processes. For example, The National Medicinal Plants Board of India has included FairWild’s ecological principles in its *Guidelines for Good Field Collection Practices of Medicinal Plants*. FairWild has also helped shape biodiversity and resource management legislation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

FairWild and international policy implementation

The FairWild Standard is also proving instrumental for the implementation of regulatory frameworks – bridging the gap between existing broad conservation guidelines and management plans developed for specific local conditions. The Standard is a useful tool for Parties in meeting their commitments under international conventions.

FairWild and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Countries exporting plant and animal species listed in Appendix II of CITES are required to demonstrate levels of export are not detrimental to the survival of the species concerned. This is achieved through the compilation and issuing of a so-called Non-detriment finding (NDF) by the CITES Scientific Authority of the country concerned. The ecological criteria of the FairWild Standard (formerly ISSC-MAP) have informed technical discussions on development of NDF procedures at international CITES expert meetings in Mexico and elsewhere. The FairWild Foundation also provides guidance on adaptive management schemes for wild-harvested resources; an important consideration for NDF evaluations.

TRAFFIC has field-tested the FairWild Standard as a means of guiding the development of an NDF for *Pelargonium sidoides* in Lesotho and South Africa, as part of the international project "Saving Plants that Save Lives and Livelihoods", funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-ordinated by TRAFFIC and WWF Germany. *Pelargonium sidoides* is currently not listed in CITES, but populations are under severe pressure due to land conversion and harvesting.

FairWild and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The FairWild Standard has clear links to the CBD's core aim of conservation of biological resources, including their sustainable use and fair sharing of benefits resulting from such use.

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC)

The FairWild Standard is an excellent tool to achieve several targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, which was adopted in 2002 by the Convention on Biological Diversity. The GSPC covers issues of sustainable use of plant diversity and benefit-sharing, and aims to contribute to poverty alleviation and sustainable development through inclusion of its targets in national government policy and private sector guidelines. The comprehensiveness of the FairWild Standard and the flexibility in its implementation make the FairWild Foundation an ideal partner for governments, companies, NGOs and community-based plant collection operations working towards fulfilment of the GSPC targets.

ISSC-MAP, a precursor of FairWild Standard, has been cited as a tool to support implementation of specific GSPC targets in the Plant Conservation Report presented at CBD CoP 9, and was also referenced in the *European Plant Conservation Strategy* (EPCS), a document which translates the GSPC into a European context.

Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) requirements

Parties to the CBD recognize that access to genetic resources must be subject to Prior Informed Consent and has to be based on Mutually Agreed Terms, including fair and equitable sharing of any resulting benefits. The CBD also requires that use of related Traditional Knowledge occurs with the approval of the holders of that knowledge, who must also participate equitably in the resulting benefits. However, awareness of ABS remains limited at the community, government, civil society and private sector levels. Furthermore, policies that help to develop and implement ABS in practice remain a significant challenge.

The FairWild Standard includes ABS elements as important constituents of sustainable use practices. These principles have been used in practice, for example in a FairWild implementation project in the Brazilian Amazon. The project worked to establish agreements on conservation and benefit-sharing with different partners, including the private sector.

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