

Standards and Criteria for the Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Minutes of the 1st Expert Workshop on the Isle of Vilm

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at

Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
International Academy for Nature Conservation, Isle of Vilm

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STEERING GROUP
for the development of:
Practice Standards & Performance Criteria
for the Sustainable Wild Collection
of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants



TRAFFIC

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MEDICINAL
PLANT
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GROUP

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1 Introduction/Background

An estimated 40,000 to 50,000 plant species are used in traditional and modern medicine systems throughout the world. While some medicinal and aromatic plant species (MAP), in particular those with high volumes in demand from national and international markets, are currently sourced from cultivation, the majority of MAP species used in medicine is still – and will be over the long term – provided by collection from the wild.

A considerable portion of the world's MAP species and populations are threatened due to over-harvesting, land conversion and habitat loss. Approaches to wild MAP collection that balance the needs of local, regional and international markets with the need for conservation and sustainable use are urgently needed. Existing principles and guidelines for conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants address primarily the national and international political level, but only indirectly provide the medicinal plant industry and other stakeholders, including collectors, with specific guidance on sustainable sourcing practices.

This is why the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the IUCN Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) and WWF/TRAFFIC initiated a process aiming at the development of globally relevant "Practice Standards and Performance Criteria for the Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants" (S&C).

The S&C Steering Group formed by BfN, IUCN and WWF/TRAFFIC seeks to involve relevant stakeholders from ecological, socio-economic and fair trade sectors in the process of developing and testing standards and criteria for sustainable wild collection of MAPs. Their specific expertise and advice on the design of practical guidance will support the promotion and implementation of MAP standards. These stakeholders represent their sectors in an international, interdisciplinary Advisory Group.

A first draft version of the S&C was circulated in November 2004 for discussion with the Advisory Group. The 1st expert workshop on the Isle of Vilm provided a discussion forum for the members of the Advisory Group on process related issues, the first draft S&C and the testing phase of draft standards in field projects. The latter will start in summer 2005 and will complement the theoretical discussion and test the relevance and practicability of the S&C.

The present document summarises the results of the workshop.

2 Summary

2.1. Objectives of the workshop

The main objectives of the 1st expert workshop on the development of ‘Practice Standards and Performance Criteria for the Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (S&C)’ were to discuss:

- general questions concerning the S&C process;
- the role and input of the Advisory Group to the development and implementation process;
- the first draft S&C document (November 2004);
- a draft concept for the evaluation of S&C in field projects.

2.2. Participants in the workshop

The participants in the 1st expert workshop were mainly members of the interdisciplinary S&C Advisory Group that is being established as part of the S&C development process, representing relevant stakeholders and geographical regions:

- Certifiers
- Companies and Business Associations
- Consultants
- Governmental authorities
- Health Institutions
- International government organisations (IGOs)
- Non-government organisations (NGOs)
- Scientists
- UN Organisations

(List of participants, see Annex 3.2)

2.3. Expectations of participants

The following expectations concerning the workshop and the S&C project in general were expressed at the beginning of the meeting:

- Initiation of a process that will eventually lead to the publication of useful standards that can be implemented by companies, communities and enterprises involved with wild collection and supported by certifiers, conservationists, industry and regulators.
- A process that leads to practical and widely applicable tools for wild collection which are applicable at the lowest possible level (collectors, local purchasers) and can be adopted by actors higher up in the chain of custody/supply.
- Specific results applicable at the local level, in a manner that does not impose a barrier in the market.
- Development of a framework of S&C for sustainability assessment of MAP species and of areas of MAP collection, as detailed as possible and as general as necessary.

- A means to engage commerce in conservation via responsible resource management (i.e., fair, sustainable wild collection) in its own interest.
- A constructive discussion on issues related to sustainability and nature protection.

(for more details see Annex 3.3: Biographies of participants)

2.4. Results of the workshop

2.4.1. The S&C Advisory Group

- A synopsis of the professional expertise as well as the geographic expertise/experience represented by the current members of the Advisory Group led to the following results:
 - Strong expertise is available for Europe and parts of Asia (India, Nepal), and to a minor degree also for Africa and South America.
 - Few Advisory Group members represent expertise with focus on North America, China and Oceania.
 - The expertise fields of resource management, sustainable collection, production chain, equity, responsible business practices and standard setting are well represented.

(For details, see Annex 3.4: Advisory Group - Expertise)

Other workshop sessions showed that the cosmetic and perfume industry is one important user of MAPs not yet represented in the Advisory Group.

All workshop participants agreed that the expertise gaps identified should be filled by inviting additional experts to participate in the S&C project. Recommendations were passed to the Steering Group members, who will select and recruit additional Advisory Group members.

- ToRs for the Advisory Group were prepared by WWF and distributed on the last day to be commented on after the workshop *(see Annex 3.5: ToRs for the Advisory Group)*.

2.4.2 Users and uses of the S&C

A matrix of the expected users and their respective actions was developed aiming at

- clarifying the way the standard should be drafted by identifying the main users of S&C;
- supporting the decision on who should be involved in the process of drafting;
- identifying stakeholders that should be targeted strategically to get the standard adopted.

Content of the matrix:

- Stakeholders that are expected to adhere to/fulfil the S&C are mainly collectors and parts of the supply chain (organisers of collections and cooperatives).
- Resource owners and parts of the supply chain (organisers of collections and cooperatives) are seen as main actors concerning the implementation of S&C.
- Requirement/demand for S&C was particularly stated for the supply chain (especially from finished product manufacturers and the retail sector) and consumers as well as resource owners

and managers, regulatory authorities, NGOs, developmental organisations and trade/business organisations.

- Certifiers and also regulatory authorities were identified as main actors to assure that standards are met.
- Parts of the supply chain and consumers are expected to pay the costs emerging from use of S&C.
- S&C are expected to be promoted above all by NGOs, developmental organisations, IGOs, trade and business associations and also practitioners.
- Regulatory authorities, trade and business associations as well as IGOs are expected to adopt the S&C.

(for details see Annex 3.6: Matrix – Users and uses of S&C)

2.4.3 Discussion of the draft S&C document (Draft 1, November 2004)

(i) Concerning the central purpose/objective of the S&C the following wording for the ‘mission’ and the ‘objectives’ statements were elaborated:

Mission: To ensure the long-term survival of MAP populations in their habitats while respecting the traditions, cultures and livelihoods of all stakeholders.

Objectives: This standard provide a framework of principles and criteria that can be applied to the management of MAP species and their ecosystems. It provides guidance for sustainable wild collection of MAPs, and a basis for audit and certification.

(for details see Annex 3.7: Interim results from development process of mission and objectives of S&C)

(ii) Two subgroups and a subsequent plenary session revised the order and content of the S&C principles resulting in the following proposal:

Proposal for Re-ordering and Completion of Principles

(Background colours indicate blocks that should stay in sequence)

1. Collection of MAPs complies with all relevant local, national, and international laws.
2. a) MAP population assessment and [data collection/documentation] practices/protocols are established to develop good collection practices. These protocols are undertaken at regular intervals and in relation to the scale of [operation/collection].
OR:
b) Assessments of population, species, ecosystem, and cultural issues related to MAP collection are performed and documented.

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|----|---|
| 3. | A management plan is written [and kept up to date] to direct/guide wild collection operations consistent with MAP population assessment and [data collection/documentation] protocols. |
| 4. | Good collection practices are implemented consistent with MAP population assessment, [data collection/documentation] protocols and the management plan. |
| 5. | Monitoring of the [impact/implementation] of collection is conducted at regular intervals. |
| 6. | The environmental impact of collection is minimized. |
| 7. | a) Local and indigenous peoples' customary rights of use and management of territories and wild collected MAPs are recognized and respected.
OR:
b) Long-term local and indigenous peoples' rights of access to and use of wild harvested plants and MAP resources are [ensured/supported/respected]. |
| 8. | Wild collection of MAPs is undertaken according to quality [and quantity] requirements of the market. |

D. Leaman will propose appropriate wording for the principles of the next Draft S&C going into the second consultation round.

Several terms used in scope, objective and principles need to be defined. The participants agreed on passing additional suggestions concerning the glossary to D. Leaman.

(iii) Plenary discussions and the recommendations of a third working group on the former 'Standard IV' of the November draft led to the following results concerning the structure of S&C:

- some elements included in the first draft standard are beyond a useful and practical scope of S&C for sustainable wild collection of MAP, in particular ecosystem impacts (a focus of draft standard I), impacts of domestication and cultivation (a focus of draft standard III), and fair trade (a focus of draft standard IV).
- relevant elements from draft standards I,III, and IV should be united with elements proposed for draft standard II, and revised as a single standard for sustainable wild collection with different components.
- the revised standard for sustainable wild collection of MAP should support responsible social standards.
- the revised standard should enable harmonization with appropriate ecosystem, fair trade, and other relevant standards.

(for details of discussion see Annex 3.8: Minutes and interim results from working groups on S&C principles and structure and Annex 3.9: Revised Practice Standard)

2.4.4. Assessment of S&C in field projects

Potential test projects from different geographical regions were presented. Workshop participants were asked to develop proposals for a testing methodology which would provide information about

applicability and relevance of S&C in the field to subsequently refine the standard including the results from the field assessments.

Reflecting the different project backgrounds the results of the workshop session show that different assessment concepts have to be developed in order to adapt the testing to the specific project requirements. WWF/TRAFFIC will develop a concept for a testing methodology that will be flexible but also sufficiently standardised to make assessment results comparable.

Core issues for all test field projects:

- Preliminary theoretical assessment of information available and information gaps (desk research)
- Local experts to support and participate in the assessment
- Assurance of a minimum organisational level of project needed to carry out the assessment
- Field visits

Existing good practices for setting up field tests should be incorporated.

Results of the field tests should be published in a MAP relevant journal (e.g. addressing traders).

(for details, see Annex 3.10: Results of small working groups on field testing)

2.4.5. Outstanding questions concerning the S&C project

During the workshop several issues and questions concerning the S&C development process were raised which require further discussion. These pending questions will have to be addressed in upcoming communication and consultation during the course of the project.

- Do the various areas of products and markets (aromatic¹, medicinal²) require distinct approaches to the development of S&C for wild collection?
- How should the variety of end uses of MAPs be addressed with S&C?
- What strategy is appropriate and adequate to reach relevant countries and stakeholders in the development and implementation of S&C?
- How can the capacity building needs for stakeholders be identified and addressed during the development and implementation process of S&C?

(for details, see Annex 3.11: General questions raised in the plenary sessions)

¹ Including the beauty/cosmetic/personal care products sector and the aromatic herbs & spices for use in culinary/food sector

² Including the medicinal herbs for use in drugs sector and the related medicinal herbs for use in dietary supplement products and/or natural health products sectors

2.4.6. Proposed timeline for the further S&C development process

What?	Who?	When?
1 st meeting of Advisory Group on the Isle of Vilm	All	December 2004
Preparation and distribution of minutes	WWF/TRAFFIC	December 2004/January 2005
Incorporation of Vilm results into the draft S&C	IUCN	December 2004/January 2005
1 st Consultation on revised draft	All	mid February to mid April 2005
Compilation of comments on revised (2 nd) draft S&C	WWF/TRAFFIC	mid to end of April 2005
Incorporation of comments into revised (3 rd) draft S&C	IUCN	May/June 2005
Preparation of field testing	WWF/TRAFFIC and projects	January 2004 to June 2005
Field testing	WWF/TRAFFIC All	July 2005 to July 2006
2 nd Meeting of Advisory Group	All	Winter 2005
2 nd Consultation on the revised (4 th) draft S&C (incorporating results of field testing and 2 nd meeting of Advisory Group)	All	
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The finalisation of S&C is scheduled for the end of 2006		

2.5. Presentations

The following list shows all presentations of the workshop. To get a copy please contact WWF Germany at MAP-Standards-Criteria@wwf.de.

- Background of the project, role of BfN, IUCN, WWF/TRAFFIC (U. SCHIPPMANN)
- The Advisory Group – Terms of reference, participating individuals and organisations, expertise and regional cover (S. HONNEF)
- Development of Standards and Criteria for the Sustainable Collection of Medicinal Plants – A Viewpoint from Industry (B. STEINHOFF)
- Chances and challenges of certification – Experiences from India (P. JAIN)
- Standards development and setting – Experiences of FSC (S. SALVADOR)
- Introduction to the draft concept of field project assessments (A. PFROMMER)
- Iracambi Medicinal Plants Project, Brazil (E. GALLIA)
- Medicinal and Aromatic Plants – Wild Collection and Sustainable Use, Bosnia-Herzegovina (R. ANDJELIC)
- Conservation and Sustainable Utilisation of Rhatany, Peru (M. WEIGEND)