

Saving Plants that Save Lives and Livelihoods

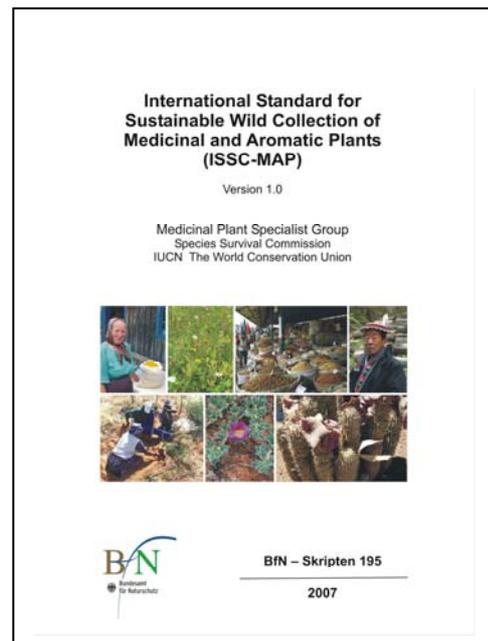
International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP)

Medicinal and Aromatic Plants – Essential Resources, Declining Supplies

An estimated 50,000 - 70,000 plant species are used in traditional and modern medicine throughout the world. These species make an essential contribution to healthcare, provide an important source of income to rural harvesters, and, along with species used more for their aromatic properties, fuel a major industry in herbal products, pharmaceuticals and fragrances.

The great majority of medicinal and aromatic plant (MAP) species used today are collected from the wild. Unfortunately, available information suggests that up to 15,000 MAP species could be threatened, many as a direct result of unsustainable collection practices.

This pattern is likely to continue for the foreseeable future due to the high costs of domestication and cultivation of MAP species and other factors. Moreover, cultivation is not necessarily the most beneficial production system for some MAP species. For many collectors, economic benefits and conservation incentives are derived from sustainable wild collection. Cultivation is unlikely to meet demand for many MAP species, particularly those that are slower growing, used in low volumes, do not command sufficiently high and stable prices in the global market, or are believed to be more potent in their wild form.



Supporting Sustainable Wild Collection

Industry, governments, organic certifiers, resource managers and collectors are concerned about declining MAP populations and supplies, and are asking for a means to assess whether wild collection is sustainable. Consumers also want evidence that products are produced sustainably and ethically.

ISSC-MAP has been developed to meet this need, and is the product of wide consultation with these and other stakeholder groups.

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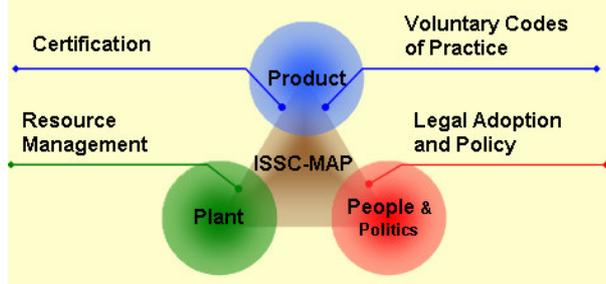


ISSC-MAP: 6 Principles



ISSC-MAP provides clear principles, criteria, indicators and verifiers that will enable industry, resource managers, collectors and other stakeholders to assess and monitor the sustainability of wild resources and collection practices. The Standard focuses on ecological aspects of good collection practices (GCP), which are often neglected: the need for thorough but cost-effective resource assessments and the determination of sustainable yields. Social and economic factors are also addressed. ISSC-MAP builds on but does not replace existing principles, guidelines, and standards for sustainable forest practices, organic production and good agricultural practices, fair trade, and product quality.

Priority Implementation Strategies



Four primary pathways for implementation of the Standard were identified during the initial development phase. These will be evaluated through projects undertaken during 2007 and 2008.

ISSC-MAP – Collaboration in Action

The process to elaborate ISSC-MAP began in 2004 as a joint initiative of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the IUCN Medicinal Plant Specialist Group, WWF Germany and TRAFFIC. The initial core group has expanded to include industry associations, companies, certifiers, and community-based NGOs through international steering, advisory and technical groups.

Next Steps – 2007 - 2009

Version 1 of the Standard was launched in February 2007 and is now available for application to MAP collection operations. Specific projects are being developed to test the Standard's applicability in a variety of geographic, ecologic and socioeconomic conditions of MAP collection and use. The outcomes of these projects and other experiences with using ISSC-MAP will be used to develop guidance, case studies, and models for good collection practice. This experience will also be used to further refine the Standard, with Version 2 to be produced in 2009.

This period will also be used to develop an appropriate business model for ISSC-MAP. The aim is to ensure that the Standard itself operates on a sustainable basis in order to deliver sustainable use and conservation of MAP while meeting the needs of the different stakeholder groups.

Interested? How You Can Be Involved

We welcome additional collaborators from within government, industry and NGOs for trial applications of ISSC-MAP in new and existing collection operations. These trials will demonstrate applicability of ISSC-MAP to company codes of practice and existing certification standards, and to national legislation. Financial assistance is also needed to support further development of ISSC-MAP, including with regard to business planning, field projects, and coordination.

For more information please contact:

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 All documents related to the ISSC-MAP are available from: <http://www.floraweb.de/map-pro>