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International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

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

Saving Plants that Save Lives and Livelihoods

The *International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP)*, published in 2007, is currently being implemented by WWF, TRAFFIC, IUCN and their partners in six wild collection projects world-wide. Within these projects models of adaptive ISSC-MAP implementation are developed to demonstrate effective management and sustainable use of wild-collected plants, ensuring thereby the long-term survival of the natural populations and contributing substantially to local livelihoods.

Diverse and valuable: Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP)

MAP and other botanicals, used in the health care, herb, cosmetic and food/culinary sectors, are among the most diverse and valuable natural resources for humankind. They occur in almost all terrestrial and some aquatic ecosystems around the world. Increasing demand and pressure on species and their habitats, however, are threatening many plant species collected from the wild.

Industry, governments, certifiers, resource managers and collectors are concerned about declining plant populations and supplies, and are searching for methods to verify the sustainability of wild collection.

With the **International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants** (ISSC-MAP) a tool has been provided to all stakeholders in the MAP sector to develop and verify sustainable use systems for botanical raw materials.

The standard was developed in a joint initiative of WWF, TRAFFIC – the wildlife trade monitoring network, IUCN and BfN, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, with the support of many other stakeholders from businesses, governments, NGOs and science.

***Pelargonium sidoides*, Lesotho (B. Paetzold)**

Going Wild

Developing a standard with principles and criteria is only a first step - to become effective, it needs to be implemented.

With financial support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), WWF, TRAFFIC, IUCN and partners from local NGOs, governments, collectors groups and the private sector have started implementing the ISSC-MAP in selected projects in six countries and regions world-wide. These are: Brazil, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Lesotho, and Bosnia-Herzegovina / South-east Europe East Europe

International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

MEDICINAL PLANT SPECIALIST GROUP

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The 18 months project period ends mid 2009. Each regional project has its particular ecologic and socio-economic characteristics, resulting in different challenges and opportunities for ISSC-MAP application and general development perspectives in the long term. But they all share a common vision: to save the plants that save lives and livelihoods!

Wild Collection in Bosnia-Herzegovina (B. Paetzold)

In the Himalayas

Nepal, with its amazing variety of ecosystems from the Terai lowlands in the south to the world's highest peaks in the north, is home to an astounding plant diversity, with more than 1,500 plant species used for medicinal purposes. Like in India, community forest management structures are often already in place, which is a good starting point for ISSC-MAP implementation. The project focuses on two regions: The community managed Kangchenjunga Conservation Area and the Langtang National Park area and Buffer Zone.

In the Greater Mekong region

In Cambodia, the MAP sector is still underdeveloped. Little is known about the structures of the MAP sector and levels of collection and trade. It is obvious, however, that traders from China have recently expanded their activities into Cambodia, which increases the pressure on the country's natural resources. There is keen interest to implement the ISSC-MAP on the political level in Cambodia, but this requires more in-depth research on the Cambodian MAP sector and trade structures. ISSC-MAP implementation will be initiated in a selected area to provide a model project.

In the tropical Amazon region

Partner for the project implementation in **Brazil** is AVIVE (Associação Vida Verde da Amazônia), a group of women commited to research and sustainable harvest of native MAP species. The improvement of livelihoods creates incentives for habitat conservation. The project is located in the area around Silves, Amazonas state. Brazil is an economically emerging country with an increasing domestic demand for products based on plants which originate from eco-friendly production or sustainable harvesting.

Selling medicinal plant products, Brazil (X. Buitron)

In Southern Asia

India is among the world's largest producer (and, increasingly, also consumer) countries of MAP sourced from the wild. In remote areas, MAP collection provides an essential portion of family incomes and plays an important role for health care. India is very advanced in establishing community-based management structures for the use of natural resources. There is strong political support for applying the ISSC-MAP as a tool to make collection practices sustainable. The project is being implemented in two states: Uttarakhand in the Western Himalayas and Karnataka in the Western Ghats.

Community participation; India (G. Kinhal)

In Southern Africa

The project in Lesotho (and bordering South African provinces) targets one species: *Pelargonium sidoides*. Tiny and unimpressive as they appear, these plants have been highly valued for their healing power, not only in the region but also abroad e.g. in Germany, where products containing extracts of *P. sidoides* are top-selling medicines for fighting cold and other 'winter' infections.

***Pelargonium sidoides*, Lesotho (B. Paetzold)**

Although a large industry depends on this plant, little is known about the impact of harvest on the survival of the species and no efficient management schemes are in place. Due to the slow recovering of the tuber after collection harvesters might reharvest too soon and thus start destroying plants. The project aims to introduce the ISSC-MAP as a tool to develop a regional management system to ensure the sustainable harvesting of *P. sidoides* in Lesotho and South Africa. The project will also explore how the ISSC-MAP can be used as a tool for CITES non-Detriment Findings. Government authorities, collectors, NGOs and the private sector are key partners.

In South-east Europe

South East Europe is the main European source region for MAP collected from the wild. Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) is of particular interest, because the country is still in the process of being reconstructed after the end of the civil war in 1995. Recently built private structures focusing on MAP trade and a modern legal framework offer favourable conditions to promote the sustainable harvesting and use of MAP in BiH; the project envisages creating, in close cooperation with resource authorities and industry, a model that can be replicated elsewhere in the region.

Resource assessment, Lesotho (B. Paetzold)

Outlook

ISSC-MAP implementation in the six aforementioned projects will provide valuable experiences on the applicability of the standard in different situations, guidance and training needs, expected costs as well as benefits resulting from the standard's implementation. These will be crucial for the envisaged revision of the Standard in 2009.

Implementation of the ISSC-MAP in the project regions strongly depends on support from local governments, collectors associations, NGOs and the private sector. We highly appreciate their contribution to these implementation projects**.**

Traditional healer, Nepal (nautilusfilm/WWF)