

Sustainable Wild Collection - Introduction to Certification Requirements

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Exploiting resources

According to the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) 50'000 to 70'000 medicinal and aromatic plants (MAP) are estimated to be used world-wide. These resources are heavily under pressure and about 15'000 medicinal plant species may be threatened to some degree.

Shaping a sustainable future

Our natural resources must be protected and used wisely. But social and economic development must also continue to reduce poverty and improve people's lives. We need to find solutions to balance the needs of people with the environmental needs of our planet. Certification therefore needs to integrate all demands and give answers to complex questions.

Step 1 - organic certification

Step 1 towards sustainable wild collection is organic certification. In Article 12 (2) of Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007 the basic requirements for organic certification of wild collected plants are described:

- the plants need to grow naturally in natural areas;
- those areas have not, for a period of at least three years before the collection, received treatment with products other than those authorised for use in organic production;
- the collection does not affect the stability of the natural habitat or the maintenance of the species in the collection area; respective prove has to be given.
- the flow of goods must allow full traceability.

Step 2 - ISSC-MAP certification

The International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) is strongly focusing on the conservation aspect of wild collection. It also integrates legal and ethical requirements as well as management and business practices. With its 6 principles, 18 criteria and 100 indicators this standard is the most comprehensive technical guide presently available for wild collection activities.

Step 3 - FairWild certification

The FairWild Foundation aims to provide a worldwide framework for implementing a sustainable, fair and value-adding trading system for wild-collected natural ingredients and products thereof.

This framework offers a Total Quality Management System to assure buyers that products are sourced and produced in a socially and ecologically sound way. FairWild Certification is directed to companies that can demonstrate also ecologically sustainable collection activities and hence are ISSC-MAP certified (recommended) or certified organic according to well established standards. The standards are based on the following principles.

- Fair Relationship between Company and Collectors
- Fair Working Conditions
- Fair Trade Relations: Wild Collection Companies strive for fair and quality conscious trade behaviour; the wild collection companies respect common FairTrade principles in the trade relation with its FairTrade buyers.

Conclusion

Sustainable wild collection standards needs to ensure the continued use and long-term survival of medicinal and aromatic plant (MAP) species and populations in their habitats, while respecting the traditions, cultures and livelihoods of all stakeholders. With the 3-step-approach of organic certification, ISSC-Map and FairWild a comprehensive and easy-to-handle tool is provided for interested projects and companies.