Progress on the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MP)

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

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There has been substantial progress on the development of the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP), an undertaking initiated in 2004 by MPSG through IUCN Canada, in partnership with WWF, TRAFFIC, and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation / Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BNH). The previous volume of Medicinal Plant Conservation (MPC) reported the definition of the standard’s goal and objectives, and development of the main principles of the ISSC-MAP based on two preliminary drafts and their review and revision by a broad-based advisory group (MPC 11: 4-5). We can now report further progress in the following areas: field consultations, completion of an implementation study, stakeholder consultations, and refinement of the text of the standard in the first public working draft. Most recently, we have taken initial steps with key partners to establish a governance and management structure that will move the ISSC-MAP from development to implementation, and to select and initiate implementation models.

Field consultations

The relevance and practicality of the second draft standard was tested August - October 2005 in five existing MAP field projects. The projects were selected from different geographical regions, offering a range of socio-economic and resource management circumstances:

- A private company, Andelic d.o.o. in Bosnia-Herzegovina (financed by BBN/INA, and SIPPO),
- A non-profit initiative, Irocambi Medicinal Plants Project in Brazil (financed by Manfred-Hermsen-Stiftung),
- A state-owned and managed protected area of Wanglang National Nature Reserve & Balma State Forest in China (financed by WWF Germany),
- A community-based agro-artesanal producers association (AAPPSME) in Ecuador (financed by UNCTAD, with additional support from Manfred-Hermens-Stiftung) (p. 17),
- A non-profit Sustainably Harvested Devil’s Claw project in Namibia (financed by Salus Haus, Germany).

A final field consultation, focusing on community-managed collection areas for medicinal plants in India is being carried out in November-December of 2006 by the Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), in India, with funding from Plant Life International.

Implementation study

Results from the field consultations were evaluated during a second expert workshop on the Isle of Vilm in December 2005, providing many practical recommendations concerning the structure and content of the standard (SALVADOR 2005).

Eight scenarios in which the ISSC-MAP might be implemented effectively (figure 1) were identified during field consultations and by participants in the second Vilm
workshop (Salvador & Pätzold 2005), including: voluntary, self-regulating efforts (first-party claims); codes of practice adopted by trade associations or through industry policy (second-party claims); and independent certification or labelling schemes backed by government regulations, NGOs, or certification bodies (third-party claims).

Stakeholder consultation
Opportunities for implementation of the ISSC-MAP in partnership with organic certification, were presented to the First IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements) Conference on Organic Wild

From January - April of 2006, an implementation study was carried out to assess how the standard might be used by different stakeholder groups and under different implementation scenarios (Kathie & Gallia 2006). Principal strategies examined include:

- Integration with existing standards and mechanisms (e.g., CITES non-detriment findings for species listed on Appendix II).
- Partnership / harmonization with existing or developing standards and mechanisms (e.g., organic and fair-trade certification schemes, BioTrade principles and criteria).
- Stand-alone mechanism (e.g., verification / certification by one or more members of the ISSC-MAP steering group).

Production, convened in Bosnia and Herzegovina in May 2006 (Leaman et al. 2006). A side event convened by MPSG together with WWF and TRAFFIC, and BIN, with support from Manfred-Hermse-Stiftung, focused particularly on the challenges and opportunities for implementing the ISSC-MAP with organic certification in East and South-eastern Europe (Pätzold et al. 2006). This event provided a discussion forum for more than 50 participants, including representatives from government conservation agencies, natural (organic) herbal product traders, manufacturers and retailers, herbalists, organic certification bodies, and conservation organizations.

The ISSC-MAP has been presented and discussed in a variety of other venues, including: Biofae (Nuremberg, Germany, February 2006), the Latin American Botanical Congress (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, June 2006), the inaugural meeting of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (Dublin, Ireland, October 2005), the
National Conference of the Canadian Herb, Spice, and Natural Health Product Coalition (St John, Newfoundland, Canada, November 2005), the NIMH (National Institute of Medicinal Herbalists) Conference (Durham, UK, April 2006), the Supply Side East (New Jersey, USA, May 2006), the 16th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee (Lima, Peru, July 2006), Workshop “Discussion on the verification and impact monitoring assessment system for BioTrade activities” (Lima, Peru, July 2006), German Tropentag (Bonn, Germany, October 2006), and the 12th International Conference and Exhibition of the Egyptian Society for Producers, Manufacturers & Exporters of MAP (Cairo, Egypt, November 2006).

**Table 1. ISSC-MAP Principles and Criteria (Working Draft, June 2006)**

**SECTION I: WILD COLLECTION AND CONSERVATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Principle 1. Maintaining Wild MAP Resources**
Wild collection of MAP resources shall be conducted at a scale and rate and in a manner that maintains populations and species over the long term.

1.1 Conservation status of target MAP species
The conservation status of target MAP species and populations is assessed and regularly reviewed.

1.2 Knowledge-based collection practices
MAP collection and management practices are based on adequate identification, inventory, assessment, and monitoring of the target species and collection impacts.

1.3 Collection intensity and species regeneration
The rate (intensity and frequency) of MAP collection does not exceed the target species’ ability to regenerate over the long term.

**Principle 2. Preventing Negative Environmental Impacts**
Negative impacts caused by MAP collection activities on other wild species, the collection area, and neighbouring areas shall be prevented.

2.1 Sensitive taxa and habitats
Rare, threatened, and endangered species and habitats that are likely to be affected by MAP collection and management are identified and protected.

2.2 Habitat (landscape level) management
Management activities supporting wild MAP collection do not adversely affect ecosystem diversity, processes, and functions.

**SECTION II: LEGAL AND ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Principle 3. Complying with Laws, Regulations, and Agreements**
MAP collection and management activities shall be carried out under legitimate tenure arrangements, and comply with relevant laws, regulations, and agreements.

3.1 Tenure, management authority, and use rights
Collectors and managers have a clear and recognized right and authority to use and manage the target MAP resources.

3.2 Laws, regulations, and administrative requirements
Collection and management of MAP resources complies with all international agreements and with national, and local laws, regulations, and administrative requirements, including those related to protected species and areas.

**Principle 4. Respecting Customary Rights**
Local communities’ and indigenous peoples’ customary rights to use and manage collection areas and wild collected MAP resources shall be recognized and respected.

4.1 Traditional use, access rights, and cultural heritage
Local communities and indigenous people with legal or customary tenure or use rights maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over MAP collection operations.

4.2 Benefit sharing
Agreements with local communities and indigenous people are based on appropriate and adequate knowledge of MAP resource tenure, management requirements, and resource value.
SECTION III: MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

Principle 5. Applying Responsible Management Practices
Wild collection of MAP species shall be based on adaptive, practical, participatory, and transparent management practices.

5.1 Species / area management plan
A species / area management plan defines adaptive, practical management processes and Good Collection Practices.

5.2 Inventory, assessment, and monitoring
Management of MAP wild collection is supported by adequate and practical resource inventory, assessment, and monitoring of collection impacts.

5.3 Transparency and participation
MAP collection activities are carried out in a transparent manner with respect to management planning and implementation, recording and sharing information, and involving stakeholders.

5.4 Documentation
Procedures for collecting, managing, and sharing information required for effective collection management are established and carried out.

Principle 6. Applying Responsible Business Practices
Wild collection of wild MAP resources shall be undertaken to support quality, financial, and labour requirements of the market without sacrificing sustainability of the resource.

6.1 Market / buyer specifications
The sustainable collection and handling of MAP resources is managed and planned according to market requirements in order to prevent or minimise the collection of products unlikely to be sold.

6.2 Traceability
Storage and handling of MAP resources is managed to support traceability to collection area.

6.3 Financial viability
Mechanisms are encouraged to ensure the financial viability of systems of sustainable wild collection of MAP resources.

6.4 Training and capacity building
Resource managers and collectors have adequate skills (training, supervision, experience) to implement the provisions of the management plan, and to comply with the requirements of this standard.

6.5 Worker safety and compensation
MAP collection management provides adequate work-related health, safety, and financial compensation to collectors and other workers.

Content of the standard
A first public working draft of the ISSC-MAP (MPSG 2006) incorporates comments from the Advisory Group, results of the field consultation phase, and discussions during the 2nd Vilm workshop. The current working draft of the ISSC-MAP has six principles and 18 criteria, addressing ecological, social, and economic requirements for sustainable wild collection of MAP. These are summarized in table 1. Each criterion is supported by a set of proposed indicators and forms of control, or verification.

Some elements of the ISSC-MAP will require additional definition and guidance. For example, tools and processes for assessing sustainable yield are essential to the effective implementation of the ISSC-MAP. In September 2006, a workshop hosted by BIIN and the University of Koblenz-Landau on the Isle of Vilm, brought together approximately 40 individuals working on field assessment of sustainable yield of medicinal and aromatic plants, or of other wild-harvested non-timber resources, to discuss tools and processes available, and their relevance to medicinal and aromatic plants. Results from this workshop will be incorporated in guidance for applying the ISSC-MAP.

Governance and management of the ISSC-MAP
As we move now from the development to the implementation phase of the ISSC-MAP, we and our advisory group colleagues recognize that new structures are required for governance and management of both the standard and the process of its implementation. The Steering Group and several of the most actively involved members of the advisory group met on 18-19 September 2006 to plan this transition. This workshop was hosted by Manfred-Hermes-Stiftung in Bremen, Germany.

The original Steering Group and Advisory Group will be expanded and differentiated into four new structures:
• a secretariat, housed within WWF Germany and TRAFFIC Europe;
• a decision board, adding to the original steering group certification and industry expertise, and expanding regional expertise;
• a technical board, which will advise the decision board on specific issues related to implementation and further development of the standard; and
• ad hoc task groups to provide expertise on specific issues, such as those related to particular species of MAP.

Implementation models

Over the next few years, we are looking forward to the challenge of working with partners to implement the ISSC-MAP. We have identified four priority strategies that will provide a broad range of models and practical experience in applying the ISSC-MAP: certification, resource management, legal adoption and policy, and voluntary codes of practice. We are currently developing implementation projects in several regions.

Information on the status and activities of this project is available via the project website (www.floraweb.de/map-pro, viewed 16.11.2006).

References


Supplier audit in MAP collection and cultivation: Buyer perspective in Germany

Ernst Schneider

Medicinal and aromatic plants (MAP) are used as starting material either as active ingredients of herbal medicinal products (e.g. “traditional” and “well-established”), as minor, non-active components of food supplement products (e.g. combined with vitamins), as foodstuffs and spices or food additives, as herbal and fruit beverage teas and juices, or as ingredients in cosmetic products. From the perspective of industry the focus lies on the quality of plant raw material. The need for supplier audits along the supply chain is part of the companies’ overall quality management system and no distinction is made between cultivated and wild collected plant material. However, from the legal point of view there are distinct differences between herbs used for medicinal and for food purposes. For example, culinary herbs and spices, regulated under the Foodstuffs and Commodities Act (LFGG), can be of food-grade quality (e.g. ASTA-, DIN- or ISO-standards) and are subject to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for foods. Herbs for use in medicinal products, regulated under the German Medicines Law (AMG), must be of pharmacopoeial-quality (e.g. DAB- or PhEur-standards) and are subject to pharmaceutical GMPs.

What is an audit?

The term is derived from the Latin word “audire”, to hear. It is basically a question and answer process. Audits are generally carried out by the buyer’s Quality Control Unit, responsible for vendor approval, or by a 3rd party auditing organization, during site visit inspections at the supplier’s farm or wild collection area. The auditor is interviewing the supplier according to a Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) and is deriving conclusions about conformity from the answers. In addition to an inspection and interview, the supplier may also be asked to complete an audit questionnaire document. It is important to note that auditing is the attempt to control a production system through a selective and short-termed questioning process. Therefore, the auditor can only check the systematic principles involved in the process not the entire process itself.

Who is the buyer for herbal raw materials?

MAPs are used as starting material in the pharmaceutical industry for the production of medicinal products and in the food industry mostly to enhance taste or as physiologically active ingredients. It is very important to realize that the two types of buyers (pharmaceutical and