

FAIRWILD  
STANDARD

The FairWild Standard<sup>2</sup> (FWS) was developed to ensure sustainable collection and maintenance of wild plant populations, as well as the social sustainability aspects of collection, and fair conditions of labour.

Beyond certification, the FWS principles form the basis for the development of community resource management practices, sustainable resource management strategies and regulations. The FWS is recognised as the best-practice framework for sustainable wild collection and equitable trade in the implementation toolkit of the GSPC. FairWild certification also provides a value-adding option for producers.

In Central and South-eastern Europe, the number of traditional wild-collectors is declining due to continuing urbanisation, putting at risk the survival of the tradition of wild-collection and use of medicinal plants. This issue is being addressed through separate initiatives, for example the “*Traditional and Wild*”<sup>3</sup> project in Central Europe, focusing on the promotion of sustainable wild-harvesting, fair trade and revitalization of the tradition of wild collection.



## European policies on wild plant conservation and sustainable use

Contemporary European use and trade in medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) is extensive. Over 2,000 wild plant species are estimated to be traded commercially in Europe, of which 60-70% are native to central Europe, and over 90% of these species are still collected from the wild. There is a continuing challenge to ensure that wild-harvesting and trade is sustainable and equitable.

**CONSERVATION MEASURES** There are extensive conservation efforts focused on plants and their habitats at all scales from the international to the national, and increasingly, market tools are being developed to promote the sustainable use of medicinal plants. The over-exploitation of wild resources has been identified as the primary threat to medicinal plants in Europe.

**Protection of habitats and species: international framework** On the international level, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) promotes biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biodiversity. The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) adopted by the CBD at the 2002 Conference of the Parties (CoP) sets targets and objectives for the period 2011-2020 which are of direct relevance to medicinal plants. The CBD Strategic Plan agreed in Nagoya, Japan, during the CBD CoP10, established 20 target actions (the Aichi Biodiversity Targets). CBD is further developing an area of work around biodiversity and human health, supporting the delivery of primarily Aichi Target 14 on ecosystem services.

A further outcome of the CBD CoP10 was the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In the European Union (EU), the Nagoya Protocol is implemented through regulation 511/2014.

Another agreement that provides a framework for trade in medicinal plants is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Over 65 plants traded for medicinal and aromatic purposes are subject to regulatory control under Appendix II of CITES. Useful tools developed to support the implementation of CITES include the voluntary guidance on non-detriment findings (NDF), set out to assess whether the trade in particular species is detrimental.

The World Health Organization (WHO) in its Traditional Medicine Strategy, prioritized the finalisation of the update of the WHO/IUCN/WWF/TRAFFIC Guidelines on Conservation of Medicinal Plants, to provide guidance to WHO members on the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants.

**Protection of habitats and species within Europe** European countries and EU Member States are signatories to a number of regional conventions and Directives targeted at conserving species and their habitats, including vascular plants.



*Iris spuria* CREDIT: Ghislain Chenais /Creative Commons

<sup>2</sup><http://www.fairwild.org/standard>

<sup>3</sup><http://traditionalandwild.eu/en/>

<sup>1</sup>The Red List status of taxa is one of the most widely used indicators for assessing the condition of ecosystems and their biodiversity. At the global scale, the primary source of information on the conservation status of plants and animals is the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species TM ([www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org))



The EU Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) is a binding international legal instrument that aims to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats and to promote European cooperation towards that objective. Also at the pan-European level, countries endorsed the pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity, which refocuses efforts to prevent further loss of biodiversity in the region and provides a mechanism for supporting the implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

EU nature conservation policy is based on two main pieces of legislation – the 1979 Birds and the 1992 EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). The main aim of these directives is to ensure the favourable conservation status of habitats and species found in the EU. One of the main tools to enhance and maintain this status is the Natura 2000 network of protected areas, which currently contains over 27,000 terrestrial and marine sites, covering almost a fifth of the EU land area as well as substantial parts of the surrounding seas. In addition the EU has committed to a long-term (2050) vision and mid-term headline target for biodiversity, to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020 and restore them in so far as possible. The establishment of these policy instruments indicates the high political commitment to biodiversity conservation and the need to monitor the status of biodiversity so as to assess progress towards meeting conservation objectives and targets.

There are a number of geographically-specific conventions (e.g., The Alpine Convention or the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians) in the European region. In order to co-ordinate the implementation of the GSPC at the regional level, the European Strategy for Plant Conservation (ESPC) was adopted. First developed in 2001, the Strategy was renewed and targets aligned to GSPC were set for 2008-2014.

Plant habitat conservation efforts have in part been focused through the identification of Important Plant Areas (IPAs). IPAs are internationally significant sites for wild plants and threatened habitats, and contain over 700 of the most threatened species in Europe and millions of hectares of the most threatened habitats. At least 1,770 IPAs have been identified in 16 European countries.

**CONCLUSION** Conclusions and recommendations for the development of policy and sustainable business practices for conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants in Europe include:

- Effective government regulations and policies create an enabling environment for the conservation and sustainable use in wild medicinal plants in Europe. Tools such as the FairWild Standard can be applied to improve existing management practices and provide a framework for such policies.
- Integrate medicinal plant conservation measures into National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and where relevant develop specific plant conservation strategies at the national or sub-national level.
- Cross-sectoral co-operation between ministries is important for the development and implementation of effective medicinal plant conservation and sustainable use strategies. Such cooperation should extend across all sectors, including environmental protection, agriculture, forestry, economic and rural development, and health.
- Encourage the uptake of the FairWild Standard and certification scheme for sustainable wild-harvesting and equitable trade to prevent population decline of wild-collected species.
- Engagement of multiple stakeholder groups is of critical importance to the successful policy implementation.



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The views expressed are those of the individuals and organizations that contributed to the case studies and do not necessarily reflect those of TRAFFIC.

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## NATIONAL LEGISLATION

At the national level, countries have developed legislation to focus conservation efforts of habitats and threatened plants. Examples of relevant legislation include the identification of protected or endangered flora, national Red Books or Red Lists. By 2007, almost all EU countries had initiated national Red Lists. Countries in the region have also developed NBSAPs, accompanied by the national reports against the implementation. In some cases, specific national response to the GSPC (e.g. UK, France, Austria) were developed. A number of protected areas are established on sub-national, national, and transboundary levels, contributing to plant habitat and population conservation efforts.

Strategies specific to sustainable wild-collection of plants have also been developed in a few European countries (e.g., some Balkan states), but such efforts remain scarce. In common with other areas of biodiversity conservation, the level of co-operation between sectorial Ministries at the national or sub-national level may be limited, which potentially prevents the development of better medicinal plant conservation strategies.

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