WILD PLANT HARVESTING

Guidelines n°25:

Regulation on wild plant harvesting

according to Ecocert Organic Standard (EOS)
I. **Wild plant harvesting: qualify for organic certification**

Ecocert Organic Standard sets out rules on plant production and on the harvesting of wild plants considered as organic production provided it complies with the following requirements.

NB: the harvesting of wild marine algae may also be considered as organic production (please refer to Guidelines on aquaculture no. 20). However hunting and fishing wild animals may not be eligible for organic certification.

II. **Rules on the harvesting of wild plants and auditing**

A. **Compliance requirements**

- Harvest area has not been treated for at least 3 years prior to harvesting, with any other products but those approved by EOS and listed in Annex I (fertilisers and amendments) and Annex II (phytopharmaceuticals).

- the harvesting should not be a "factor of instability for the natural environment or an obstacle to the preservation of species in the harvesting area".

Both rules above features on the check list of auditors. Therefore when being audited, harvest workers should able to provide documented proofs to Ecocert on that matter.

B. **Inspection requirements**

At the time of initial inspection, harvest workers should be able to provide a full description of the collecting area (maps pinpointing the sites), a list of collected plants, a listing of internal harvesting procedures and related actions such as storage and processing, to the control body. Any considerable changes in the operations should notified in due time to Ecocert.

At least one inspection a day is performed, during which all operational facilities and locations. All documents related to the harvesting, and processing and export if applicable, should also be checked. Additional random or planned inspection are likely to be scheduled when harvesting occurs all year round.
III. ECOCERT requirements on wild harvesting

A. First inspection / Description of the unit

Prior to the first inspection, operators must draw out a full description of the unit and operations (including conventional operations located in the same area). This should include all the required documents listed below (Harvesting Management Plan). Upon ECOCERT’s request, operators should be able to provide documented proofs that harvesting area has not been treated with prohibited substances; that harvesting designated plot is suitable to ensure the sustainability of the natural habitat of the collected variety; that an audit trail recording details on harvesting of wild products to be sold is up-to-date and available.

An undersigned statement including the above information and the acceptance of procedures in case of breach of regulations or malpractice (terms and conditions of the contract with ECOCERT) should also be included.

Every year, the operator should advise the control body of the list of designated organic product, the harvesting planning and transport methods.

Harvesting Management Plan:

- **Harvesting area:**
  - provide a detailed description of every subarea of the natural habitat, the landscape and erosion risk factors
  - a chronological description of the harvesting area, i.e. detailing the specific use allocated to the land for the past 3 years
  - cross contamination risk factor: pesticides or other chemicals, hydrocarbons, heavy metal etc.
  - number of harvest workers for each area (only mention one harvest worker, when collecting as a family)

- **Maps:** scale, definition of boundaries of the harvesting area (pathway, road sides, hedges, villages), subareas if applicable, sketches of the transformation facilities.

- **Traceability:** coding of harvesting areas or harvest workers when they operate harvesting from multiple locations.
• **Products**: plant name (local, English, scientific name), plant end-use (medical, food, cosmetic, fuel etc.), harvesting dates and plant growth stage at the time of harvesting

Details on protected varieties and restrictions applicable in the harvesting area.

• **Description of the harvesting process and specific rules applicable to the designated collected plant**: list of all plant parts being collected, of plant parts that should remain untouched, measures taken to ensure long-term stability of the natural habitat during harvesting, action plan to prevent destructive harvesting practices, definition of the portion(%) of plants to be collected, other simultaneous harvesting operations for the same type of plant in the same location (overexploitation), harvesting methods and equipment cleanout process.

• **Harvest workers identification**:
  o exhaustive list of **registered harvest workers** and existing storage operators
  o **written commitment** from harvest workers & training certificate, training description:
    ✓ harvesting within the designated area as per process
    ✓ staff qualification handling plants from harvesting to finale product sales
    ✓ health & safety process to protect harvest workers from toxic substances
    ✓ classification & recognition of plants
    ✓ organic production basics

• Details on **local and national rules** on harvesting; official permit if applicable; name of local authority granting permission, if applicable.

• **Harvest**: estimated resources for each harvesting subareas, amounts collected per areas, harvesting records, storage records, purchase orders, processing and sales records (all regular accounting documents including invoices and delivery receipts)

• **Processing**: cleaning products used, cleaning written procedure, records of consignment operation, labels.
B. **Separation of production facilities**

Harvesting areas, storage units and plants from certified harvesting should be adequately separated from non-organic plants and non authorized substances.

C. **Archived documents**

Written documents and/or accounting documents must be kept to provide an audit trail of the origin, type and quantities of all raw materials purchased. The type, quantities and destination of all farmed products sold should be recorded separately.

D. **Packaging & labelling of organic products**

Products may be transported only in appropriate packaging in order to prevent any substitution of the content. The label should clearly state names of the producer, product and certification body.

E. **Mixed organic and conventional production**

When operators are running both organic and conventional (non-organic) farms in the same location, all data related to the conventional units (e.g. purchases of inputs, cultivation plan) should also be audited. When identical or not easily differentiated varieties of plant are also collected as per conventional standards, organic harvesting may not be performed simultaneously.

F. **Inspection planning & sample collection**

Harvesting areas and processing units should be audited at least once a year. Extra spot checked may also be planned. Samples for analysis purpose may be collected (in the event of suspected use of prohibited substances). Operators should provide all requested information during the audit and give ECOCERT full access to all facilities. In case of doubt on the organic origin of products purchased or collected, operators should notify ECOCERT as well as clients, with regards to products which have already been sold as organic and downgraded to conventional at a later stage.
G. Internal auditing (ECOCERT requirements)

When faced with too high a number of large harvesting areas, of harvest workers, of collected plants varieties for a full yearly inspection to be performed, ECOCERT may request that strict internal audit procedures be put in place in relation with the organic operations. During inspection, ECOCERT will then be auditing these processes in terms of efficiency.

IV. References in EOS

B.1 - Information and visit conditions
B.2 - Selection and management of the harvesting areas
B.3 - Precaution and separation measures harvesting
B.4 - Precaution and separation measures transport
B.5 - Precaution and separation measures storage
B.6 - Accounts, traceability and documentation
B.7 - Quality management
B.8 - Labelling and invoicing

These documents are available upon request to ECOCERT or may be downloaded from our website www.ecocert.com.