



## Risk Classification of species proposed for FairWild Standard implementation

### Explanatory notes

#### Introduction: What is FairWild risk classification?

*"Some species, because of their reproductive biology, regeneration and growth strategies, or population structure, are inherently more able to withstand the continual perturbations of resource extraction than others."* (Peters 1994<sup>1</sup>)

- In implementing the FairWild Standard version 2.0<sup>2</sup>, a distinction is made between species considered to be at high, medium or low risk of unsustainable collection.
- The susceptibility to over-collection is **species-specific**. Different species will respond differently to the same collection pressures. The **susceptibility** or **resilience** is the overall potential of the target species to be managed on a sustained-yield basis.
- Ecological attributes such as distribution, regeneration or reproduction will determine how resilient a given species is against collection pressure. For example, an endemic species will be more susceptible to over-collection than a globally distributed one; a slow growing species more susceptible than a fast growing one.

#### Methodology: How to assess a species?

- The methodology used to make these risk classifications has been developed by the IUCN-SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG), in consultation with the Technical Committee of the FairWild Foundation.
- The present methodology to assess the susceptibility or resilience of a species to collection is designed in a way that an expert can perform an assessment **in approximately one workday**.
- The attributes selected are drawn from extensive field experience of a number of experts in plant ecology. They include factors related to the **general biology** of the species (intrinsic factors) and some **external variables** (extrinsic factors). See Table 1 for details.
- Information used in the assessment is drawn from information sources that have been assembled by members of MPSG, and from additional sources that can be accessed primarily through **desk-based research**. Relevant information provided by the collection operation in the certification scheme application form is also used in the assessment.
- The information on which the assessment is based is documented in a fully referenced **species data fact sheet (SDFS)**.
- Based on the available information, the state of each attribute of susceptibility or risk is classified on a three-level scale of **Low, Medium or High Risk**. Where information is lacking, the factor is classified as "unknown."
- In the next step, the assessments of each individual attribute are combined to an overall assessment using the same **three-level scale of Low, Medium or High Risk**. This overall assessment is made according to a quantitative weighting system (details of which are not included here), to ensure that the system overall can be applied in a more rigorous and standardized way for all species.

<sup>1</sup> PETERS (1994). Sustainable harvest of non-timber forest plant resources in tropical moist forest. An ecological primer. WWF Biodiversity Support Program, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> FairWild Foundation (2010). FairWild Standard: Version 2.0. FairWild Foundation, Weinfelden, Switzerland. Available from [www.fairwild.org/documents](http://www.fairwild.org/documents).

## Next steps: Using the results of the risk classification

- The result of the risk classification and the information contained in the SDFS should be reviewed, and can assist the collection operation to put in place an **appropriate collection management system**.
- If proposed for FairWild certification, the information in the SDFS can also help the **certification scheme auditor** to determine whether the collection management is adequate for sustainable harvest.
- **Information gaps** highlighted during the assessment and **subsequent remarks** should also be reviewed. In developing (and auditing) an appropriate collection management system, the information in the SDFS should always be complemented by a review of any available **site-specific information**.
- If the species has been assessed as “**high-risk**”, collection operations must meet an additional set of performance indicators that require **more rigorous approaches** to resource assessment, monitoring, and management, in order to achieve FairWild certification. See the FairWild Standard version 2.0 Performance Indicators<sup>3</sup> for details.
- Risk classification is carried out based on information available at the time the analysis is carried out. The FairWild Foundation reserves the right to revise classifications according to:
  - Advances in scientific knowledge, e.g. results of global and/or national conservation assessments, improved knowledge of species biology;
  - Provision of further site-specific information;
  - Improvements to risk analysis methodology.

## For further information, contact:

### FairWild Foundation Secretariat

c/o TRAFFIC International  
David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street  
Cambridge, United Kingdom, CB2 3QZ  
Tel: +44 (0)1223 277427

Email: [secretariat@FairWild.org](mailto:secretariat@FairWild.org)

[www.fairwild.org](http://www.fairwild.org)

---

<sup>3</sup> FairWild Foundation (2010). FairWild Standard: Version 2.0 / Performance Indicators. FairWild Foundation, Weinfelden, Switzerland. Available from [www.fairwild.org/documents](http://www.fairwild.org/documents).

**Table 1. Conditions / Factors assessed in the risk analysis process.<sup>4</sup>**

Intrinsic or Extrinsic	Condition / factor	LOW RISK (Lower requirements of information, expertise, time and cost)	MEDIUM RISK (Moderate requirements of information, expertise, time and cost)	HIGH RISK (Higher requirements of information, expertise, time and cost)
Intrinsic & Extrinsic	<b>Conservation status (local, national, global)</b>	Not threatened (assessed) Populations and resource quality stable (not declining)	Unknown (not assessed) Populations and resource quality not known to be declining	Threatened (assessed) Populations, resource quality declining
Intrinsic & Extrinsic	<b>Plant part collected</b>	Leaves, flowers, fruit of perennials	Exudates (sap, resin)	Plant destroyed through collection; bulb, bark, root, apical meristem
Intrinsic	<b>Geographic distribution</b>	Internationally widespread	Regionally restricted	Locally restricted
Intrinsic	<b>Local population size</b>	Often large, spread homogeneously	Medium to large	Everywhere small, scattered thinly
Intrinsic	<b>Habitat specificity</b>	Adapted to various habitat types	Adapted to few habitat types	Specific to one habitat type
Intrinsic	<b>Regeneration</b>	Fast growing, easily resprouting	Species growing at medium rate, partly resprouting	Slow growing, not resprouting
Intrinsic	<b>Reproduction</b>	Asexual; wind pollinated; many viable seeds; abiotic dispersal	Sexual; pollinators common; seed dispersers common	Dioecious; monocarpic; specific disperser; few viable seeds
Intrinsic & Extrinsic	<b>Threat causes</b>	None known or likely to exist	Single threat	Multiple threats or severe habitat loss; destructive collection practice
Extrinsic	<b>Scale and trend of use and trade</b>	Single use; trade low or decreasing; no shortage	Several uses; trade medium or slowly increasing	Several conflicting uses; trade high or increasing; shortages

<sup>4</sup> Factors used in the assessment are modified from those presented in the FairWild Standard version 2.0 Performance Indicators (Table 2, p. 4, based on Cunningham (2001) and Peters (1994)).