

FairWild Operator Support Fund: concept note

Wild plant biodiversity is under increasing pressure, from land conversion and climate change as well as unsustainable direct harvesting for use as ingredients. This has a direct impact on those who rely on wild plant trade: frequently some of the poorest and most marginalised people in society, in rural communities who lack formalised land rights and other income generating opportunities. Inequity in global value chains can also result in relatively little of the product value being retained by those that harvest them.

Concept

In addition to the FairWild Standard revision (which aims to increase accessibility to the Standard implementation and certification), the FairWild Operator Support Fund (OSF) seeks to support FairWild's mission by providing a range of financial and technical support measures to wild plant collection businesses ("operators"). Typically, these businesses and the collectors who supply them are vulnerable to disruptions to their livelihoods from environmental, social and other factors, usually more so than other actors in the value chain, as well as being more severely impacted by them. Technical and financial support will help to increase operator resilience by conserving biodiversity and managing their natural resources sustainably through the framework of the FairWild Standard.

Goal

The goal of the fund is, in the first instance, to contribute to the achievement of SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), in relation to wild-harvested plant ingredients. The OSF will achieve this by providing financial assistance to operators to support projects that:

- Maintain and increase resilience of collectors' economic interests in wild landscapes; and
- Respond to threats and adverse circumstances, whether they be financial, physical disaster, political or other, minimising risk to their current and future livelihoods and prospects.

In this way, the fund aims to engender systemic change, and also to contribute directly to other SDGs, including 1, 5, 12, 14, 15 and 17¹.

Sources of Funds

The fund is built from payments made by business under [FairWild's derogation policy](#) as well as specifically donated funds from partners, clients or other agencies.

Disbursement of funds

Funds may be applied to a range of interventions, including training, technical services and support, support for audit costs, purchase of equipment (e.g. driers or other equipment for partial processing), risk underwriting, conservation interventions to secure landscape integrity and ongoing productivity, or direct financial assistance in the case of disruption to livelihoods.

The application process and criteria will be available on the FairWild website.

Reporting and accountability for funds

FairWild will provide an annual report, concomitant with its corporate reporting, demonstrating sources and applications of the OSF over the preceding year. Where donors have made contributions with express limiting provisions, they will receive a specific account of the uses of their donation. FairWild will levy a charge of not more than 5% on any fund disbursement, as a contribution to administrative and other costs.

For more information and to support the fund, contact:

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¹ SDG 1: No poverty; SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production, SDG 14: Life below water, SDG 15: Life on land, SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.