



TS25(EC)V04en\_Wild Crop Harvesting

# COLLECTION OF WILD PLANTS

## **Guidelines n°25:**

## **Regulation on wild crop harvesting**

according to Ecocert Organic Standard (EOS)



## I. Collection of Wild plant: 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 collection of wild plants and auditing

### A. Compliance requirements

- ✓ The collected plants shall grow naturally without any agricultural measures (fertilization, irrigation, treatment, etc.) otherwise the activity would be considered as a "crop production" and should be certified individually.
- ✓ Harvest area are public or private lands (natural or agricultural areas) and, in general, of vast size, they have not been treated for with prohibited inputs at least 3 years prior to harvesting.
- ✓ 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". Collectors shall be trained to collection techniques and be kept informed of the quantities that may be collected.

These rules feature on the check list of Ecocert auditors. Therefore, during audit, documented proofs on that matter should be provided to Ecocert.

### B. Project organisation

Certification of collection of wild plants shall be considered as a project with different actors:

**Collectors:** individuals not submitted to the control system on their own, who collect wild plants on definite areas under conditions allowing their marketing as organic products and sell them exclusively a Collection center. Simple processing (drying, cleaning) may be done at the collector's home.

Collectors are contracted directly by the Main operator or the Collection center and shall sign a commitment to comply with organic production rules.



If they supply the same plants to different Collection centers that don't belong to the same project, they shall be controlled and certified on their own.

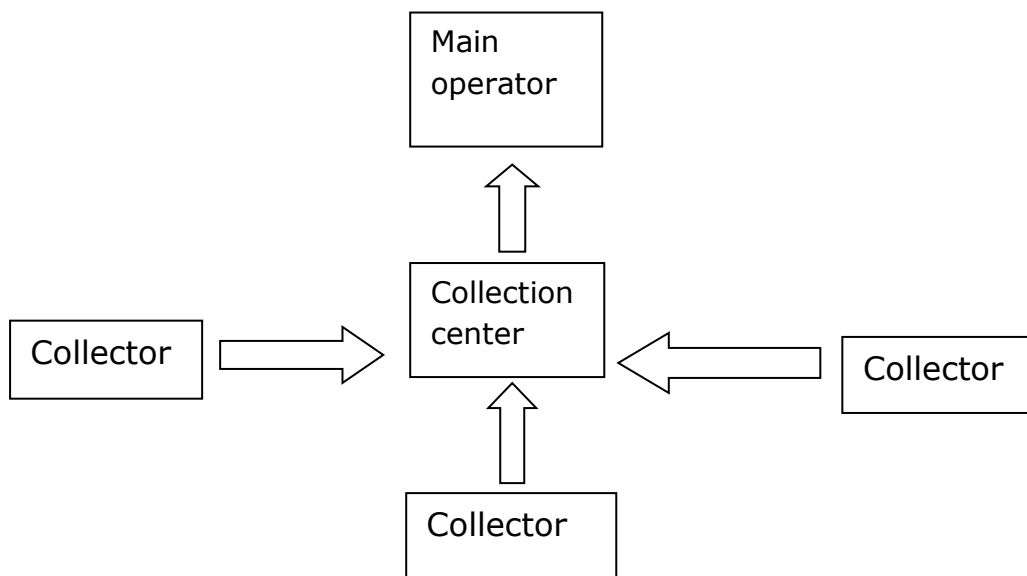
They may collect non-organic plants but only those that are different and easily differentiated from the organic ones.

**Collection centers:** buy and gather the plants from the collectors, potentially store and process and then resell them to the Main operator. In general, they belong to the Main operator and are controlled as a second site. If they are independent, they shall be certified on their own and contract with the collectors, they are then responsible for the collection project and considered as suppliers of the Main operator.

If the Collection center is only a broker who connects the collectors and the Main operator (direct sale and delivery from the collectors to the Main operator), he doesn't need to be controlled.

**Main operator:** company or holding contracted with Ecocert and submitted to the control system that resell and usually export the collected plants, in most cases he is responsible for the project and is the certification owner. He may process, store and/or package the products at its premises or at another controlled site.

For some simple cases of organisation, the Collection center and the Main operator are the same entity.



### **C. Requirements regarding inspection**

Any collection areas, collection centers, store houses, processing and/or packaging units and the Main operator shall be inspected at least once a year. A certain number of collectors are also met and controlled.

Additional random or planned inspection are likely to be scheduled when harvesting occurs all year round.

Samples for analysis purpose may be taken (in the event of suspected use of prohibited substances or for detecting possible contamination) at the level of collectors, collection centers or Main operator.

Main operator 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, he 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.



### III. Collection Management Plan

Prior to the first inspection, operator responsible for the project must draw out a full description of the project, its unit and operations (including conventional operations located in the same area) by filling in the “**Unit Description Form qinfo 40**”, notably the specific module on Wild Collection that is presented in the form of a “**Collection Management Plan**” and used to assess the risks. The form shall be updated and sent to Ecocert every year before the following campaign, however any change in the project all along the year (e.g. collection of new plants, new collection areas, change in the list of collectors or collection centers) shall be notified in due time.

The Collection Management Plan shall demonstrate the compliance of the project with EOS requirements, it includes the following elements:

#### A. Collection areas description:

- Identification and/or codification of the collection areas
- Localisation and details of landscape (mountains, plains, etc.) and type of habitats (forest, fields, meadows ..).
- A chronological description of the collection area, i.e. detailing the specific use allocated to the land and the treatments for the past 3 years (an attestation by a reliable third party in case of public lands or from the private owner in case of private lands confirming the absence of treatment with non-allowed substances on the collection area will have to be provided).
- Cross contamination risk factor: pesticides or other chemicals, hydrocarbons, heavy metal etc.
- Plans : surface areas, **detailed maps** (scale 1:25 000 to 1:50 000) with definition of boundaries of the collection areas (pathway, road sides, hedges, villages), neighbouring sources of contamination (industries, motorway, conventional field crop, ...), buffer zones if applicable, sketches of the store houses, transformation facilities and collection centers. Where in the area, some parts are not eligible for certification (contamination, treatment, protected zone, etc.), they shall be clearly indicated on the map.



## **B. Collected plants description**

- Plant name (local, English, *scientific name*), plant end-use (medical, food, ...), harvesting dates and plant growth stage at the time of harvesting
- Details on protected varieties and potential ban or restrictions applicable in the collection area (CITES lists, red lists)
- Details on **local and national rules** on collection, official permit if applicable; name of local authority granting permission, if applicable

## **C. Preservation measures of the collected plants/sustainable collection management**

- List of all plant parts being collected, of plant parts insuring the recovery that should **remain untouched** (e.g. 20 to 30% of seeds/fruits)
- Measures taken to ensure long-term stability of the natural habitat during harvesting (e.g. rotation on collection areas), action plan to prevent destructive collection practices,
- Definition of the potential or the area and portion (%) of plants to be collected
- Other simultaneous harvesting operations for the same type of plant in the same location (overexploitation),
- Harvesting methods.

## **D. Collection organisation: collectors identification and traceability system**

- Number of collectors for each area (only mention one harvest worker, when collecting as a family)
- Exhaustive list and potential codification of **registered collectors** per areas + training attestation.

The list shall be approved by Ecocert before the beginning of the collection campaign. Only listed people may supply organic plants (see model of list in Annex 1).



- List of potential intermediaries: Collection centers (with mention of the responsible person and of the concerned collectors/ center), store houses, processing units.
- Training of collectors on :
  - ✓ Compliance of the collection within the designated area
  - ✓ Sustainable collection techniques
  - ✓ Classification and recognition of plants
  - ✓ Organic production basics
  - ✓ Measures of identification and no mixing/non contamination by non-allowed inputs during collection, storage, transport or processing.

- **written commitment** from collectors (see model in Annex 2)

Each collector shall sign a contract with the operator responsible for the project in which he commits to:

- ✓ Collect only within the designated area
- ✓ Collect only the defined plants according to the sustainable collection methods for which he has been trained.
- ✓ Not outsource the collection by people not registered by the operator responsible for the project.
- ✓ Warn in case of detection of any source of contamination on the collection area
- ✓ Not handle the same products in conventional and organic quality
- ✓ Work exclusively with the operator responsible for the project for a given type of plants
- ✓ Allow inspections and sampling by Ecocert and give access to the collection area, stores and processing facilities.

NB: In case of collection as a family, this is possible to have a contract with only one responsible. However, the number of collectors within the family shall be defined beforehand and the identified responsible shall ensure that the members of the family perform the collection according to the conditions in question.

## **E. Storage, processing by the collectors**

During the collection, the transport, the storage and potential basic processing activities (drying, cleaning), every measures shall be taken to avoid contamination of the collected plants by non-allowed substances (use of clean tools, separated storage, untreated trays for drying, use of clean bags, ...).



## **IV. Marketing and traceability of collected products**

### **A. Collection centers**

Upon receiving the collected plants, the Collection center shall check that the collector and the products delivered are included in the list previously established and come from the defined areas. Otherwise, the delivered products may not be considered as organic.

A receipt should be given in name to the collector with mention of the date, type and organic nature of the plant, the collection area and the quantity.

Products shall be identified with a label bearing the identification of the plant, the reference to the organic production and the collection year. This is suggested to implement a lot number system which would permit to identify the collection area and the collector.

A **purchase register** shall be kept by the Collection center for each plant (see model in Annex 3): date of receipt, identification of the collector and the collection area, quantities, possible lot number.

A register of the sales to the Main operator and a regular stocktaking has also to be kept.

Contrary to collectors, Collection centers may purchase the same type of plants in an organic and non-organic form, however the certified collected plants shall be clearly identified and separated from the non-organic plants and from the non-allowed substances.

All data related to the conventional activity for the same type of plants (e.g. purchase and sales register, stocks) should also be audited.

### **B. Main operator**

The requirement regarding the Main operator (transport, storage, processing,...) are the same as for a processor and/or a handler. For more details please refer to "Guidelines N° 27: Processors, handlers & importers".

The Main operator is usually the exporter of the collected products to the EU, please refer to "Guidelines N° 29: Exports to the EU" for more information.

**These documents are available upon request to ECOCERT or may be downloaded from our website [www.ecocert.com](http://www.ecocert.com).**





ANNEX 1

**COLLECTORS LIST**

**Collection Area:**

**Collection Center:**

**Collection year:**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Nb of family members</b>	<b>Date of training</b>



ANNEX 2

**CONTRACT MODEL**

**Important notice:** *this is a standard contract to be used as a template. However any other document drafted for contract purpose may also be used by the Project responsible to seal contractual agreements with collectors. In any case, the document should be duly signed by the collector.*

**Contract**

Between

..... (Collector)

And

..... (Responsible of the project: Collection center or Main operator)

**The Collector hereby commits:**

- To collect only within the designated area
- To collect only the defined plants according to the sustainable collection methods for which he has been trained.
- Not to outsource the collection by people not registered by the operator responsible for the project.
- To warn in case of detection of any source of contamination on the collection area
- Not to handle the same products in conventional and organic quality
- To work exclusively with the operator responsible for the project for a given type of plants
- To allow inspections and sampling by Ecocert and give access to the collection area, stores and processing facilities.

**The Responsible of the project commits:**

To co-ordinate the organic collection of plants project

To co-ordinate the organic inspections

To train the collector on sustainable collection techniques and provide the necessary elements (detailed maps of collection areas, list of defined plants).

Place:

Date:

Collector's name:

Signature:

For ..... (Project responsible name)

Signature:



## ANNEX 3

**PURCHASE REGISTER****Collection center:****Plant:**

<b>Date of receipt</b>	<b>Collector /Code</b>	<b>Collection area</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Lot number</b>

