



Farm
Sustainability
Assessment
BY SAI PLATFORM

FSA Principles and Practices for Sourcing Wild Harvested Botanicals

The embedding of sustainable practices in the wild harvesting of botanical ingredients is critical for companies looking to safeguard their supply chains and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

These ingredients are increasingly threatened by ecological degradation, often linked to poverty-driven deforestation and agricultural expansion. By prioritising sustainable wild harvesting, companies can actively support the conservation of vital ecosystems like forests, promote biodiversity, and improve the well-being of communities reliant on these natural resources. This approach helps to protect the environment and aligns with growing customer and consumer demands for responsibly sourced products, ensuring long-term resilience in supply chains.

Principles

Companies that aim to source wild-harvested botanicals in a sustainable way should prioritise the following three principles in their approach:



1 Considerate of the Environment:

- **Maintain Wild Resources:** Sustainable wild harvesting practices ensure that the botanicals being collected, such as plants, fruits, or fungi, are harvested using techniques that ensure the long-term availability of resources, without depleting the local species or harming the ecosystem. This includes respecting the restoration cycles of species and preventing overharvesting.
- **Protect Biodiversity:** Harvesting activities must not threaten surrounding biodiversity or disrupt ecosystems. There must be measures in place to protect species and habitats critical to the broader environmental health of the landscape.
- **No Negative Impact on Surrounding Areas:** Activities must avoid harmful effects on surrounding areas, such as water bodies or forests. This includes ensuring that wild harvesting does not lead to deforestation, soil erosion, or water pollution. Likewise, wild harvest operations should avoid the use of chemical inputs such as pesticides or fertilisers that can harm the ecosystem.

2 Respect for the Community:

- **Value Customary Rights and Benefit Sharing:** Wild harvest operations must respect the rights of local communities, including indigenous groups. There should be equitable benefit-sharing arrangements where local communities have access to fair compensation or other benefits from the harvesting activities.
- **Fair Contractual Relationships:** The terms of agreements between collectors and collection points must be fair and transparent. Collectors should be paid fairly for their labour, and contracts must outline clear rights and obligations.
- **Uphold Human Rights and Labor Standards:** No child labour or forced labour can be tolerated in the collection process. Compliance with international labour laws and ethical treatment of collectors is essential for sustainable sourcing.

3 Uphold the Law and Ethics:

- **Comply with Legal Frameworks:** Wild harvesting operations must adhere to all applicable local, national, and international laws governing natural resources, environmental protection, labour rights, and product safety (e.g., ILO conventions, CITES, IUCN Red List).
- **Champion Responsible Business Practices:** Businesses involved in wild harvest supply chains must uphold ethical standards, transparency, and traceability in their sourcing practices.



Practices

Companies that aim to source wild-harvested botanicals in a sustainable way should embed the following practices into their approach:

Identify and Manage Risk:

Wild-harvested supply chains should proactively identify and manage sustainability risks in their sourcing regions and practices. This should consider environmental and social factors relevant to where wild harvesting occurs.



Consider the Landscape:

Wild harvesting practices should focus on managing the landscape in which collection takes place so that harvesting activities respect and maintain biodiversity, natural resources, and ecosystems.

Collaborate:

Collection points should work together to share knowledge, streamline practices, and collectively meet sustainability requirements. This facilitates improvements and reduces the environmental impact across a broader landscape.



Continuously Improve:

Wild harvest supply chains should engage in ongoing improvements by identifying areas for better management of resources and practices.

Traceability and Transparency:

Wild-harvested botanical supply chains should be transparent and traceable.



FAQs

How does SAI Platform use these principles and practices within the FSA framework?

The Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) assesses conventional agriculture practices and does not cover wild harvesting operations. These principles and practices recognise that wild harvest operations have different considerations particularly in terms of biodiversity and environmental management. These principles and practices therefore support the FSA benchmarking approach for wild harvest frameworks, offering an extra layer of consideration for schemes focused on wild harvesting in addition to the FSA content benchmark and scheme management criteria. They do not override the FSA's benchmark process but will rather be checked during the standard FSA benchmarking process.

How were they established?

These principles and practices are aligned with SAI Platform's approach to industry solutions and were developed for wild harvest sourcing processes, based on the contributions of SAI Platform's members. They allow companies to have consistency and a common framework across the board for either wild harvested or farmed ingredients.

How can I communicate about my wild-harvested ingredients, using the FSA?

SAI Platform recommends that companies wanting to pursue verification and make claims use the Union for Ethical BioTrade's (UEBT) well established verification and certification programmes. The UEBT verification programme is improvement-focused with 'critical' requirements for "Responsibly Sourced" botanicals, or additional requirements for "Ethically Sourced" botanicals. Its certification programme is a third-party programme that will offer consumer-facing labelling to SAI Platform members. This alignment eliminates duplication of efforts and provides companies with a clearer path to compliance, while maintaining high levels of oversight and credibility.

Members who use UEBT's verification must follow UEBT's claims requirements. Users of UEBT's verification can also make FSA benchmark equivalency claims. For more information and examples of these claims, please see our FSA Communication and Claims Guidance.



FAQs

Can I use the FSA directly for wild harvesting supply chains, if I also include these principles and practices?

We would not advise that the FSA is used for wild harvesting operations as the scope of the FSA covers conventional cultivated agriculture and will not accurately reflect the measures in place in your wild harvesting operation. These principles are not a substitute for a sustainability scheme or assessment, and we do not allow any verification or claims to be made against them.

We have partnered with Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT), and we suggest that any company wanting to pursue verification should use UEBT. Their verified option gives a comparable experience to the FSA at a comparable cost, but is much more specialised, and has an expert network of auditors, Verification Bodies and in house experts.

I have another wild harvest scheme, can that be benchmarked too?

Yes. However, all schemes that wish to be benchmarked must go through the FSA's routine benchmarking process and these principles will be considered alongside that. They will not override the existing benchmarking process.



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