

Development of Standards for Forest Certification of Selected NTFPs/Medicinal Plants in Natural Forests of Central India

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An IIFM supported small pilot study for developing standards for certification of Non-Timber Forest Products was undertaken during the financial year 2010-11. The concept of forest certification (FC) has emerged as a marketing tool for linking the good forest management practices with the environmentally conscious consumers. FC refers two separate processes viz. forest management unit certification (FM) and chain of custody certification (CoC). Forest management certification is a process which verifies that an area of forest/plantations from where the wood, fiber and other non-timber forest products is extracted is managed to a defined standard. CoC certification is a process of tracking forest products from the forest to the point of sale to ensure that the wood material used in the product has originated from a certified forest.

India is home to an amazing diversity of plants, with over 46000 recorded plant species. Many of these species are used for medicinal purposes, with approximately 760 known to be harvested from the wild for use by India's large herbal medicine industry. The collection methods for many, if not most of these species, are destructive and wild populations are declining as a result. The Non-Timber Forest Product certification as a voluntary market tool, which attracts “green consumerism” has to ensure that the principles of sustainable forest management are adhered to.



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The draft set of standards for forest certification of selected NTFPs of central India were identified based on field conditions and consultations with various stakeholders in two forest divisions one each in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. This draft set of standards consists of 4 Principles, 17 Criteria and 55 Indicators. The basic premise of these standards is to help establish a system of management and monitoring of NTFPs harvesting, trade and external communication so that these resources are continuously available for both local use and external trade. The NTFP species selected for this pilot study included Tendu Patta, Harra, Achar, Aonla and Nagarmotha. However, these standards need to be further refined in more geographical areas in consultation with other stakeholders as well. A follow up study thus has been suggested.