

4.7.1 Bilateral/International cooperation and collaboration with International Agencies

Ministry of AYUSH is exploring bilateral and international collaboration in the field of medicinal plants with other countries. MOUs for bilateral Collaboration in the field of medicinal plants has already been developed for NMPB which could be appropriately fine-tuned for country specific needs for collaboration requirements. In addition, Collaboration will be explored with international agencies like FAO, World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNDP, TRAFFIC, GEF, etc. for mainstreaming of medicinal plant development strategies.

The traditional knowledge based on genetic resources needs to be brought under international best practices on TK & GRs like Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), Prior Informed Consent (PIC), etc. There are international agreements and protocols to deal with all of these issues, which are constantly evolving and we need to, not only keep abreast of all such developments but also get them tailored to suit India's interest provided we are in a position to put forth our point of view at the correct time. It is evident that the National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB) should have a dedicated mechanism to carry out requisite spadework to enable it to forge linkages with likeminded countries and render meaningful inputs to argue our case at the relevant international forums, like the meetings of the Conference of Parties (CoPs) of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) especially the current discussions on the ongoing program of work, access and benefit sharing issues under the Nagoya Protocol, trans-boundary issues under the Cartagena Protocol on biosafety etc.

Activities

- Participation in meetings of the relevant agencies at the international level.
- Exchange visits of experts with countries of interest especially those having similar biogeography as India.
- Participation in reputed international seminars/exhibitions on botanicals such as Ingredients Russia, Food ingredient China, Vita Foods South America, Canadian Health Food Association, International Food Ingredients and Additives (IFIA), Japan, Supply Side West, CPHI, World Wide. A list of important events will be drawn up after the approval by the SFC. This would also entail subsidizing industry desirous of such participation on reimbursement basis.
- Setting up information centers on medicinal plants in Indian Missions abroad.
- Providing financial assistance for acquiring international certification.
- Subsidizing specific market promoting activities like product registrations, GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) affirmation, international certifications, positive listing of Indian botanicals in the importing countries (viz. ARTG of TGA) etc.
- Resolving issues of botanical ingredients which have been illogically banned by some international regulatory bodies.
- Commissioning studies on international regulations in the medicinal plants sector as knowledge about this is scarce at present.

Eligibility

Proposals from Industry and reputed agencies having experience in international regulation on medicinal plants will be considered in project mode for commissioning studies.

Norms of Assistance

Expenditure incurred by the Industry organizations for participation in international exhibitions/fairs etc. would be reimbursed subject to prior permission being obtained from NMPB for participation by the concerned organization. Reimbursable items of expenditure would include, hire charges, stalls fabrication, developing publicity material, travel and accommodation. Reimbursement would be limited to 50% of the expenditure or Rs. 3.00 lakhs whichever is less. Other activities will be supported in project mode with 100% assistance to Public Sector and 50% of the project cost to the private sector. NMPB can also lead delegations/participate in these events.

a) Setting up of information centers in Indian Missions abroad

Information Centers for Medicinal Plants are a good way to create awareness of Indian medicinal plants. The extent of financial support for this purpose will be determined on country-basis on the recommendation of the concerned Indian Embassy, as per actual financial implication.

The proposals in project mode formulated by NMPB will be examined and approved by SFC.

(b) Commissioning studies on Specific aspects of medicinal plants

Objectives

To keep pace with the increasing trend in demand for medicinal plants' raw materials, it is necessary to periodically update the information on various aspects like production, collection, supply & marketing. Such updating will be done by commissioning subject specific studies from time to time. Support for collection of statistical information related with various aspects of medicinal plants may be provided to SMPB or other agencies identified having competence in this area by NMPB or the States.

Major areas of studies

An illustrative list of themes is as below:-

- Developing a data base of National and Regional Traders of medicinal plants and initiate work towards their registrations.
- Developing a data base of Farmers/cultivators.
- Demand and Supply of Medicinal plants
- Livelihood/yield studies
- Supply Chain Mapping
- Rationalization of Transit Pass system
- Consolidation of Yield
- Whole sale Price Data
- Developing case studies and success stories

Such studies would be awarded as per GFR provisions.

Norms for assistance

Project based proposals Will be considered by PSC/SFC.