

Georgian Society of Nature Explorers "Orchis" in the framework of ELKANA agrobiodiversity program funded by GEF/UNDP carries out monitoring and attempts to develop recommendations on protection and sustainable utilization of rare and endangered medicinal/ornamental plants in Samtskhe-Javakheti region. In 2005- the following activities are carried out and outcomes listed below are obtained.

I. Threats for rare and endangered medicinal/ornamental plants in Samtskhe-Javakheti region.

1. Over-exploitation of medicinal plants by local population and private manufactures for industrial and traditional use in folk medicine and for pharmaceutical purposes.
2. Habitat degradation caused by overgrazing- deforestation- pollution- urbanization- climate change- etc.
3. Broad social- economic and political processes such as unsustainable production and consumption patterns- human population growth- inadequate economic valuation of biodiversity- globalization of trade- etc.;
4. Institutional and social weaknesses such as poor governance- lack of intersectoral coordination and effective partnership- lack of clear environ-

- mental and development policies and of environmental impact assessments; loss of cultural identity and spiritual value- insufficient incorporation of scientific and implementation capacities-
5. Information deficit on resource amount- stand of populations and intensity of medicinal plant utilization.

II. Project objectives and activities

1. Analyze the regional baseline data on the identified short listed rare and endangered medicinal/ornamental plant species resources and assess their populations in the field: a) distribution across the region- b) density of the populations- c) vitality and fertility of the plants- d) threats- e) traditional use.
2. Preparation of data base and virtual maps for determination of IUCN criteria and categories for short listed medicinal/ornamental plants.
3. Development of recommendations to mitigate influence of the stress factors and increase sustainability of the populations in the wild: establishment of reserved areas- seed banks- life plant collections and improvement of legislative basis.
4. Cooperate with the extension and business development specialists to assess possibilities of

- on-farm production of the selected species and prepare information for farmers and processors.
5. Supply the local population with information on distribution- biology- threats- economically important properties- on-farm production technology and utilization of the selected species.

III. Outcomes and recommendations

1. Baseline information has been collected and data base is developed on species distribution- resources- utilization- traditional use- population density and plant vitality and fertility of short listed plants. Virtual maps are under processing and IUCN criteria and categories will be determined.
2. Photo archive- seed and living plant collections have been set up.
3. Recommendations on establishment of managed reserves of concert species have been developed.
4. Species suitable for cultivation in farms have been determined and recommendations on their cultivation technologies have been developed.
5. Publications are prepared for dissemination of knowledge among wide range of public on conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants.