



## CASE STUDIES - ESPC Target 12

30% of plant products derived from sources that are sustainably managed

### Conservation of *Arnica montana* in Romania

GSPC Target 12 (ESPC target 3.1)

<b>Project coordinators</b>	WWF (WWF-UK, WWF-Danube Carpathian Programme)
<b>Partner organisations</b>	University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine (USAMV), Cluj Napoca (Romania); Gârda-de-Sus Community members; Landschaftsökologie (Germany)
<b>Funding mechanisms</b>	The Darwin Initiative (DEFRA – UK)



#### Description

**Context:** *Arnica montana* is widely used as a herbal medicine for external injuries such as bruising, muscle and joint pain, and as a heart medicine in Europe. The main sources of the plant (flowers and root) are the Balkans, especially Romania, Spain and Switzerland, and they are harvested mainly from the wild. Arnica populations are in decline in many countries and it receives legal protection in France, Germany, Hungary, parts of Switzerland, and through Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive. The causes of the decline are due to loss of habitat, in particular when sustainable mountain-meadow management has been abandoned or if fertilizers are used on the meadows, and over-harvesting. There are projects such as those of the herbal company Weleda to restore and enrich arnica habitats in France, but there are still many problems of unsustainable management of European arnica supplies

**Aims.** The main goal was to develop a model for the sustainable production of and trade in *Arnica montana* in Gârda-de-Sus in the Apuseni Mountains Natural Park, resulting in benefits to both biodiversity and livelihoods. The model can be replicated in the region for other *Arnica* harvesters and other medicinal plants. The main project components were:

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#### Description (II)

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Training and capacity building for the project team and the farmers/collectors to develop monitoring methods, a local sustainable management plan and a local management and trade organisation/ business. Also the members of the local association will train others after the project finishes, and the capacity of Romanian researchers has been built in interdisciplinary approaches to conservation.

Local Resource Management and Business

**Structures:** A local association (Ecoflora) consists of local farmers and collectors, and its main tasks are to help implement the Arnica management plan jointly developed during the project. This involves resource monitoring and setting annual quotas; Ecoherba, the local business unit, covers product marketing and trade and, e.g. negotiates between traders and herbal companies and also between farmers and collectors if necessary.

**Development and construction of Arnica drying facilities and further value adding:** the dried and processed flower can be sold at considerably higher prices than the fresh product, increasing value for the local producers. To increase the chances of profitability and sustainability of the social enterprise (Ecoherba) diversification into other products (e.g., dried *Boletus edulis*) and further value-adding (Arnica oil and tincture production) has been recommended by the project.

**Research** on Arnica ecology, trade chain, socio-economic context and drying.

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**Date of case study**

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**Citations and Publications**

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**Website**

Website: [www.arnica-montana.ro/Arnica-montana\\_files](http://www.arnica-montana.ro/Arnica-montana_files),  
[www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/amontana.pdf](http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/amontana.pdf)

