

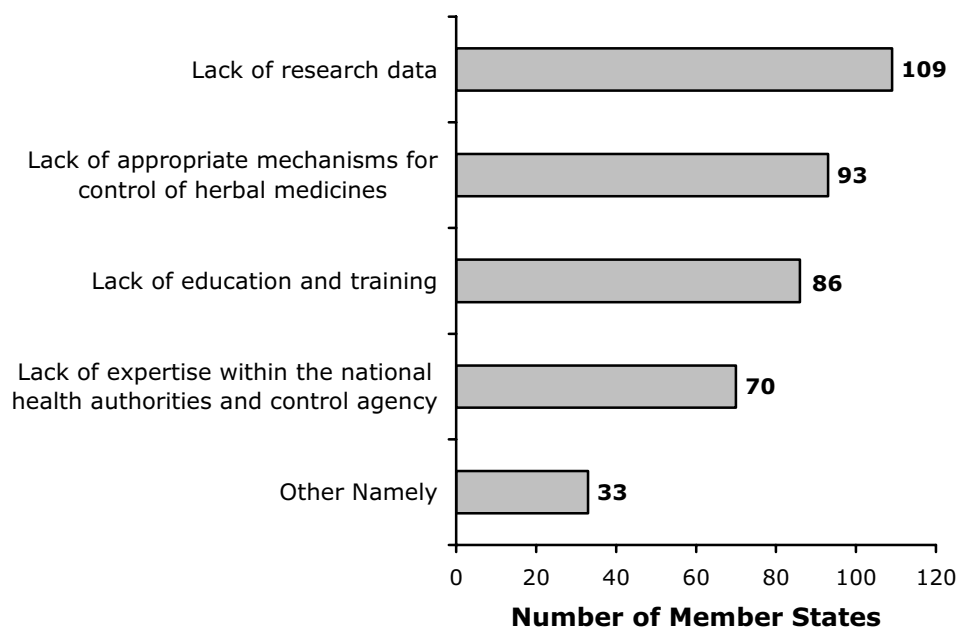
## 4. Member States, WHO and herbal medicines

### 4.1 Main difficulties faced by countries

In this section, countries were asked about their specific needs and given the opportunity to provide feedback on the types of support they most needed from WHO. The first question asked about the main difficulties faced by each Member State regarding regulatory issues for herbal medicines. The options, from which the countries could select all that applied, included the following: lack of research data; lack of expertise within the national health authorities and drug control agency; lack of appropriate mechanisms for control of herbal medicines; lack of education and training; other.

A total of 129 countries answered this question; for the detailed responses, see Figure 43 below. The category chosen by the most countries was that of a lack of research data (109 countries), followed by lack of appropriate mechanisms for the control of herbal medicines (93 countries), lack of education and training (86 countries), lack of expertise within the national health authorities and control agency (70 countries) and other (33 countries).

**Figure 43. Main difficulties regarding regulatory issues for herbal medicines**



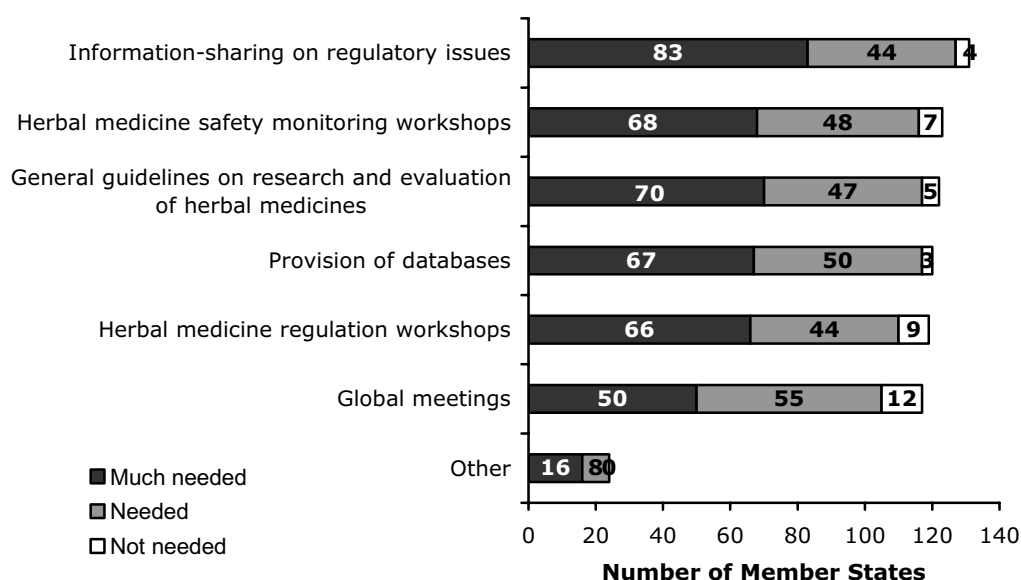
Of those countries selecting “other”, the following were the responses which were included as major difficulties regarding regulatory issues on herbal medicines: lack of funding for research, lack or inadequacy of literature, lack of support, insufficient personnel, no national quality control laboratory, herbal medicines placed on the market as food, lack of awareness of the importance of the topic, adulteration of herbal medicines and lack of support for an accreditation system for practitioners.

## 4.2 WHO support

Next, countries were asked to rate the types of support offered by WHO related to herbal medicines according to their needs and interests. They were asked to rate the following categories as “not needed”, “needed” or “much needed”: information-sharing on regulatory issues; training workshops about national capacity to establish regulations on herbal medicine; general guidelines for research and evaluation of traditional medicines; training workshops about national capacity-building on safety monitoring of herbal medicines; provision of databases; arrangement of global meetings; other types of support.

Figure 44 provides a detailed breakdown of the rating of each category of WHO support; as different numbers of countries ranked each category, the figures are given below for clarification purposes (Table 3). While a majority of countries ranked every category as “much needed”, the category cited by the most countries and the one most often ranked “much needed” was the category of information-sharing on regulatory issues.

**Figure 44. Member States' needs for WHO support**



**Table 3. Types of support requested by Member States, by level of preference**

	Much needed	Needed	Not needed	Total answers
Information-sharing on regulatory issues	83	44	4	131
Herbal medicine regulation workshops	66	44	9	119
General guidelines on research and evaluation of herbal medicines	70	47	5	122
Herbal medicine safety monitoring workshops	68	48	7	123
Provision of databases	67	50	3	120
Global meetings	50	55	12	117
Other	16	8	0	24

Of the 24 countries selecting other forms of support, the following were the suggestions reported: assistance with registration of traditional medicine; intellectual property issues; funding to develop a national database of traditional medicine and herbs; scientific references and research; equipment, facilities and funding for research; support and funding for the development of national pharmacopoeias and monographs; support for the development of regional monographs; standard normative system for herbal medicine; a workshop on adverse-effect reporting, monitoring and analysis; periodic consultant visits; visit by WHO technical advisors to assess the national situation of medicinal plants; pharmacovigilance and assistance with policy development.

### 4.3 Survey results

Finally, countries were asked to indicate preferences for the format of the report summarizing the survey results. Many countries chose more than one option, so the figures presented below in Figure 45 exceed the number of responding countries.

The five countries that chose the option “Other” expressed a preference for an electronic format available over the Internet.

**Figure 45. Member States' preference for the format of report on survey results**

